OVERCOMING HETERONORMATIVE HEGEMONY: QUEER RESISTANCE TO NEOLIBERALISM IN CHILE

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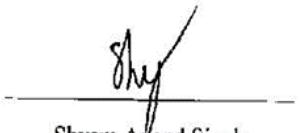
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and it has been written by me in its entirety. I have duly acknowledged all the sources of information which have been used in the thesis.

This thesis has also not been submitted for any degree in any university previously.



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Contents

Abstract

Latin America, a region traditionally entrenched in patriarchy and *machismo*, has recently experienced a seismic shift in attitudes toward Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) rights. While pride marches of the early 1990s championed radical political activism against the HIV epidemic and state-sanctioned violence, it has since been displaced by a benign atmosphere of mainstream pop anthems and corporate sponsored floats. In Chile, the image of unity framed during such events obscures the dissensions within the respective lesbian, gay, and transgender communities. Focusing on Chile's post-dictatorship era, this study seeks to investigate two main issues concerning the politics of collective action: firstly, how are these discriminatory discourses propagated and what are its implications on gay culture? Secondly, what strategies do organizations employ to overcome this collective action problem? Employing a post-structuralist theory of heteronormative hegemony, I argue that the increased commodification of gay culture induced by neoliberalism has enhanced the legibility of gay identity through heteronormative socialization. In the process, sexual minorities internalize and reproduce key forms of societal discrimination amongst themselves, chief of which has been class and gender. Following twenty years of lacklustre progress, several LGBT organizations have adopted queer strategies as a counter-measure. I contend that the appropriation of queer approaches has been relatively successful due to its emphasis on multivocality which emphasises norms of inclusion and empathy. Alongside academic articles and books, my findings are collated from two months of fieldwork and in-depth interviews in Santiago, Chile.

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used throughout the text and footnotes:

AUC	Acuerdo de Unión Civil (Civil Union Accord)
AVP	Acuerdo de Vida en Pareja (Couple Life Agreement)
FDS	Frente de la Diversidad Sexual (Sexual Diversity Front)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IGO	Inter-Governmental Organization
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer
MOVILH	Movimiento de Integración y Liberación Homosexual (Homosexual Integration and Liberation Movement)
MNCs	Multi-National Corporations
MUMS	Movimiento por la Diversidad Sexual (Movement for Sexual Diversity)
OTD	Organizando Trans Diversidades (Organization for Trans Diversity)
RN	Renovación Nacional (National Renewal)
SMO	Social Movement Organization
UDI	Unión Demócrata Independiente (Independent Democratic Union)
UP	Unidad Popular (Popular Unity)

Introduction

Darker Realities Beyond the Rainbow Flag: Class and Gender-based Discrimination in Gay Communities

On the evening of 28 January 2015, celebratory fervour gripped Plaza Italia in Santiago, the capital of Chile as activists and supporters of the queer community gathered to celebrate the passing of the civil union bill. After four years of deliberation, both houses of Congress finally endorsed the Civil Union Accord (AUC) guaranteeing health, inheritance, and pension rights to unmarried couples regardless of sexual orientation.[1] With rainbow flags swaying and pop music playing in the background, volunteers of Chile's numerous Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) organizations took turns being photographed under the watchful presence of the media. The crowd of volunteers and spectators present comprised a hybrid mix of individuals from intersecting socio-economic, political, ideological, ethnic, national, sexual, and gender identities – a picture perfect representation of *diversidad* (diversity) that the movement employs in altering societal perceptions of sexual minorities.

[1] The bill was previously known as the Couple Life Agreement (AVP). AQ Online, "Chilean Legislators Approve Same-Sex Civil Unions," Americas Society and Council of the Americas, http://www.americasquarterly.org/content/chilean-legislators-approve-same-sex-civil-unions.

This representation, however, obfuscates a more complex narrative of the internal struggles between (and within) the disparate gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender communities that some of these organizations have overcome. Far from being an accurate depiction of the state of the LGBT movement, such occasions are a rare display of solidarity in a community otherwise fraught with class, gender, and ethnic divisions.

For most movements, the initial stages of establishing group identities may, at times, be more challenging than the later process of advancing agendas. Defining group identities is critical because it has implications for the mobilization and visibility of a group's grievances. In cases where marginalized groups share little cultural affinities except the common experience of discrimination from mainstream society, problems of representation and agenda setting become more pronounced. Such issues are especially problematic for the sexual minority community. Unlike most subjugated identities, queer embodiment is generally invisible. This makes it difficult for social organizing because queer subjects can escape persecution from heteronormativity by choosing to conceal their sexual identities or 'remaining in the closet'.[2] Hence, the 'closet' essentially becomes a barrier to collective action.

Sex as Power: History of Sexuality in Chile

According to John D'Emilio, contemporary notions of sexuality are a product of the historical development of capitalism.[3] In Chile, discursive labels such as

[2] Michael Warner, "Introduction: Fear of a Queer Planet," *Social Text*, no. 29 (1991): p.13.
[3] John D' Emilio, "Capitalism and Gay Identity," in *Culture, Society, and Sexuality: A Reader*, ed. Richard Parker and Peter Aggleton (New York: Routledge, 2007)., p.240

'gay', 'lesbian', and 'homosexual', were largely inexistent in the pre-independence era. Nonetheless, this does not imply that same-sex behaviour and practices were uncommon. As Ana Mariella Bacigalupo notes, alternative sexualities and co-gendered identities were prevalent among the indigenous Reche (now known as Mapuche) peoples of Southern Chile prior to their conquest by the Chilean state. Between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, many male shamans (*machi weye*) were culturally defined as possessing co-gendered status.[4] Most *machi weye*, for instance, embodied femininity and passivity for ceremonial purposes such as receiving spirits into their bodies.[5] To the Reche, gender and sexuality did not naturally correspond to anatomy, but rather, were performed. In fact, same-sex acts between Reche males were common and were not stigmatized prior to *criollo* conquest.

Spanish colonial agents, however, viewed Reche males who engaged in anal intercourse as sodomites. During the Spanish Inquisition, the label of sodomy in popular discourse was also applied to lower-class adult men of other ethnicities and belief systems, such as Jews and Moors.[6] The discourse of sodomy, as a result, was instrumental to bolstering the prevailing ethnic, religious, class, and gender order of the colonial era. Thus, upon the conquest of the indigenous Reche population, the Chilean state labelled the practices of

[4] The term co-gendered is fundamentally distinct from contemporary concepts of 'third gender'. As Mariella explains, third-gender labels "reinforces the Euro-American idea that sex is naturally associated with gender and fixes the gender subjectivities of women, men, and third gender as static and permanent". The concept of co-gendered status, in contrast, accords the *machi weye* identity with a performative agency oscillating between the masculine and feminine realms depending on the spiritual and political contexts. See Ana Mariella Bacigalupo, "The Struggle for Mapuche Shamans' Masculinity: Colonial Politics of Gender, Sexuality, and Power in Southern Chile," *Ethnohistory* 51, no. 3 (2004): p.514.
[5] Ibid., p. 505.
[6] Rafael Carrasco, *Inquisicion Y Represion Sexual En Valencia: Historia De Los Sodomitas (1565-1785)* (Barcelona: Laertes, 1986), p.27.

the *machi weye* as 'nefarious sins' and eliminated same-sex practices by persecuting those charged under sodomy. Consequently, the indigenous population were put into reservations and eventually adopted heteronormative social codes. Some were relocated to *haciendas* (landed estates) and worked as peasants.[7] This feudal organization in colonial era, therefore, became the precedent for deep-rooted class cleavages in contemporary Chilean society.

It was not until the early twentieth century that homosexual identities became popularised in mainstream discourse. Even so, individuals who openly identified as gays and lesbians were often stigmatized and marginalised for their sexuality. Furthermore, divisions were rife among sexual and gender non-conforming minorities. Pedro Lemebel, an influential activist and artist that came to prominence in the late 1980s through his street performance of *Las Yeguas del Apocalipsis* (The Mares of the Apocalypse), disputes the notion of a homogenous 'gay community'. Instead, Lemebel claims the existence of multiple gay 'communities' in Santiago based on class, ethnic, and gender identities. In his play, *La noche de los visones* (The Night of the Minks), set in the volatile climate of the coup of Salvador Allende in 1973, Lemebel depicts two groups of sexual minorities: *las rotas* and *las regias*. The *roto* is typically of indigenous descent, belongs to an under-privileged working class, and inhabits the city's *poblaciones* (shanty towns). On the other hand, the *region* is usually a member of the middle-class, usually of European descent, and tends to look overseas, particularly northward, for his or her cultural ideals.[8]

[7] Daniel Hellinger, *Comparative Politics of Latin America: Democracy at Last?* (New York: Routledge, 2011).
[8] Kate Averis, "Queering the Margin's: Pedro Lemebel's *Loco Afán*," *Dandelion* 2, no. 1 (2011).

General Augusto Pinochet's adoption of neoliberal policies gradually led to a multiplication of homonormative identities and sub-cultures. Although the LGBTQ 'community' comprise a plurality of identities and sub-cultures, neoliberalism has paved the growing ascendance of commercial gay enclaves, that inadvertently promoted essentialist 'cookie-cutter' identities and ways of living a 'gay lifestyle'. The commodification of gay identities, in turn, has inadvertently led to the sexualisation and objectification of queer bodies and desires along Euro-American ideals. Individuals lacking the social and cultural capital to conform to such trends are further marginalized. As a consequence, the multiplication of gay identities and sub-cultures in recent decades has largely been induced by Euro-American influences.

Neoliberalism, Capitalism, and Global Capitalism

Chile is often championed as the birthplace of neoliberalism. Largely regarded as a political practice and ideology, neoliberalism is not merely an economic project, but also a socio-political one. It exalts capitalism as the most desirable economic system but considers state intervention as vital in the restructuring of basic social relations throughout society. As Marcus Taylor vividly elucidates:

> Neoliberal social engineering therefore restructures state-society relations not in order to weaken the state but rather to strengthen those state institutions that create and reinforce the disciplinary power of markets while minimising those that can undermine such discipline. The neoliberal state is therefore by no means a weak state and, of necessity, it must constantly intervene across a range of social relations in order to reproduce the conditions for a market-orientated society.[9]

[9] Marcus Taylor, *From Pinochet to the 'Third Way': Neoliberalism and Social Transformation in Chile* (London: Pluto Press, 2006), pp. 43-44.

In Chile, not only did privatization reforms affect mining industries and public services, but also resulted in a reorientation of social life. No greater were these effects felt more than in gay enclaves. In Santiago, gay clubs, bars, and saunas emerged upon democratization. But far from being a symbol for collective mobilization, these commercial establishments have been sites of identity politics that, for a long time, were left unacknowledged by gay activists. Significantly influenced by global capitalism, the 'gay lifestyle' that emanated from these sites were largely offshoots of a broader internalization of North American gay culture. In particular, these sites became abodes for white, masculine, upper-class, male bodies. Poorer, effeminate, non-white gay men and lesbians have been socially stigmatized resulting in the propagation of multiple other sub-cultures. Although visible, gender non-conformists are typically objectified as 'showpieces', relegated to performance spaces to pacify the gay male's gaze.

Research Questions

In a broader perspective, the key form of discriminatory discourses amongst sexual minorities appear to parallel the wider context of social hierarchy in Chilean society. As a deeply patriarchal and class conscious society, similar tensions are also apparent within gay spaces. Yet, despite these divisions, several LGBT organizations have been successful in mobilizing sexual and gender non-conforming minorities across the city. Hence, this study raises two key questions concerning LGBTQ organizing. The first task of this research is

to determine the possible mechanisms behind the reproduction of social hierarchies within the gay community. Appreciating that queer bodies are the site of multiple intersecting identities, I enquire on the origins of these discursive divisions. For instance, how are certain parochial definitions of male beauty defined and propagated within the gay male subculture? How do these standards exclude certain ethnic and gender minorities from forging social networks within these communities? Why do some same-sex couples model their relationships through heteronormative gender roles? What accounts for the ethnic, class, and gender segregation within queer spaces?

On a more optimistic note, however, this study also highlights the presence of countervailing discursive practices by LGBT organizations in Chile. The second puzzle this research seeks to examine is: How do dissenting organizations articulate alternative visions of the gay mission that sufficiently deviates from stereotypical characterizations of gay identity? The motive of this inquiry has implications for understanding how social organizations are able to overcome the collective action problem among sexual minorities. Queer individuals, unlike ethnic or class based minorities, are dispersed throughout society and lack any cultural or historical affinities that fosters a mutual sense of 'being gay'. That said, the increasing trend toward the formation of 'gay ghettos' and attendant subcultures is defined in opposition to heterosexist society that derides same-sex eroticism as deviances from the 'norm'.[10] Despite the lack of a historical basis for a collective LGBT identity, Mark Blasius conceptualizes a gay identity as a form of ethos: "a type of existence that is the consequence of

[10] Mark Blasius, "An Ethos of Lesbian and Gay Existence," in *Sexual Identities, Queer Politics*, ed. Mark Blasius (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001), p.147.

coming out – understood as the process of entering into and creating oneself through the field of relationships that constitutes the lesbian and gay community".[11] However, the likelihood of establishing relationships and networks of support may be conditional upon an individual's socio-economic status, ethnicity, and performance of gender roles. In fact, queer individuals unable to fit within certain labels may encounter other forms of discrimination within the community. Working-class gay men residing in Santiago, for instance, often face difficulties finding a stable support network of close friends within the gay community. The costly pursuits of a "gay lifestyle" that entails maintaining personal grooming, fashion trends, and patronizing expensive bars and clubs in upper class 'gaybourhoods' excludes those unable to afford them. Furthermore, in a *Machista* [12]driven society like Chile where masculinity is upheld as culturally superior to femininity, the exhibition of masculine traits among gay men is viewed as an attractive quality. Effeminate men are frequently derided as *maracos* (faggots) and ostracized. Despite the pervasiveness of such discriminatory behaviour, LGBT organizations like the Homosexual Integration and Liberation Movement (MOVILH), Fundación Iguales, and Movement for Sexual Diversity (MUMS) have succeeded in galvanizing a diverse following of members and supporters to the cause of non-discrimination against sexual minorities. How have these organizations managed to draw members across class, ethnic, gender, and sexual differences? In what ways do these groups practice a 'queer logic' that is distinct from the

[11] Ibid., p.143.

[12] *Machista* is similar to machismo is Spanish. In Chile, however, the word *machista* is more commonly used.

LGBT community writ large, manifested in a culture of acceptance and solidarity?

Main Argument

Although feudal hierarchies between peasants and landowners during the colonial era were the antecedents of contemporary class divisions, historical accounts of path-dependency does not fully account for the multiplication and commodification of present-day gay identities. Thus, it is significant to examine the twin influence of neoliberalism and heteronormativity as a cultural influence in the lives of queer individuals. Drawing upon Gundula Ludwig's theoretical framework of "heteronormative hegemony", this study makes two claims: Firstly, I argue that the nature of discriminatory practices prevalent among sexual minority communities in Chile is reflective of the overall state of gender, ethnic, and class relations within society and is largely a product of social conditioning within heterosexist society. This is because for most queer individuals attempting to locate their identities within the sexual minority community, the fear of exclusion compels the need to perform more powerful identities as a means of assuaging the stigma of being gay. Identities defined as more desirable are a product of existing power relations within society; for instance, the dominance of masculinity over femininity, the perceived superiority of European ancestry over indigenous bloodlines, or the supremacy of upper-class status and norms over those of the working-class. Fostered by policies of the neoliberal state, this creates an apolitical 'community' in Santiago divided along gender and class lines.

Secondly, and more importantly, I argue that some LGBT organizations and actors are able to overcome heteronormative hegemony in Chile by mobilizing through frames of *diversidad* (diversity), which involves incorporating principles of intersectionality in their organizational practice. As Yvette Taylor describes:

> Intersectionality refers to the mutually constructed nature of social division and the ways these are experienced, reproduced and resisted in everyday life. A successful intersectional practice thus explores relational and reinforcing exclusions and inclusions, the first steps of which are to identify and name these.[13]

Organizations that incorporate intersectional practices produce a cultural of ambiguity that disables privileged identities through self-reflexivity and norms of empathy. Unlike the various divisions at the community level, members in these organizations represent a diversity of different class, gender, ethnic, national, and even sexual backgrounds.

In addition to examining the effects of non-state systems on the perception and legislation of sexual minorities, this study also underscores the role of culture in shaping such perceptions. Through incorporating the notion of hegemony, popularised by Gramsci's "rule by consent" with theories of heteronormativity, the concept of heteronormative hegemony seeks to interject discussions of class, ethnicity, and gender into the topic of sexuality through a post-structuralist framework. Gay, lesbian, and transgender subcultures are often mischaracterized by heterosexist society as 'sexual deviants'. The pejorative tropes associated with these marginalized communities have arisen

[13] Yvette Taylor, "Complexities and Complications: Intersections of Class and Sexuality," in *Theorizing Intersectionality and Sexuality*, ed. Yvette Taylor, Sally Hines, and Mark E. Casey (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p.38.

from centuries of habituation by heteronormative institutions, normalizing heterosexuality and justifying it through economic objectives of procreation. Aligning with Judeo-Christian religious doctrines, most states have vilified non-procreative sexual orientations and unions as non-productive, sexually deviant, and even classified such relations as mental disorders. Stories of sexual promiscuity complemented by erotic imagery, interactions, and lifestyles in gay and lesbian subcultures have become stereotypes of gay identity around the world. Conservative groups typically cite the threat of gay lifestyles' to the family unit and state as a rationale for legal and social exclusions of sexual minorities, often ignoring the prevalence of promiscuity in heterosexist society. However, the essentialist depiction of gay and lesbian sub-cultures as overly sexualized also deters queer individuals from 'coming out' due to the commodification of gay and lesbian identities in recent years. As my research of Chile's gay sub-cultures will demonstrate, the incursion of neoliberalism in gay communities has produced essentialist identities pressuring queers individuals to conform. Furthermore, neoliberalism has also hindered the political mobilization of openly gay individuals by creating a culture of apathy through the material pursuit of 'the good life'. By elucidating how certain actors are able to challenge and overcome these collective action problems, this research aims to impart lessons for actors in other contexts. In addition, by combining perspectives from queer theory with theoretical paradigms from Political Science, this study seeks to enrich the paucity of literature on non-state systems within LGBT movements. By eradicating the culture of labels and binary markers that characterizes heteronormative hegemony, queer individuals would be more likely to come out and embrace their sexuality.

Chile's Neoliberal Peculiarity

Globalization has had a conflicting impact on queer politics in many post-colonial societies. More porous borders, on one hand, has led to greater recognition of human rights discourses, legitimizing claims to sexual freedom and transforming prejudiced views against homosexuality. On the other hand, it has empowered conservative evangelical groups in countries like the US, to export their cultural brand of homophobic discourses, thereby intensifying the stigma against sexual minorities.[14] Since the demise of the Cold War alongside socialism's credentials, most countries in the world possess some variant of a free-market system. Likewise, these countries would probably have experienced escalating societal tensions in regards to LGBT rights. A public survey conducted by the Pew Research Centre in 2013 reveal that acceptance of homosexuality was unsurprisingly more widespread in North America and Western Europe, mainly countries where expanding wealth coincided with the declining influence of the Church.[15] Amongst the developing world, nonetheless, Latin America was reported to be ahead of Asia and Africa in terms of acceptance, rivalling the developed North. At first glance, growing acceptance in the region can be explained largely through factors such as transnational activism and the declining influence of the Catholic Church. At a closer look, however, neoliberalism has also precipitated other social issues within the LGBT community.

[14] Al-Jazeera, "Are Us Evangelicals Exporting Anti-Gay Views?," (2012).
[15] Pew Research Centre, "The Global Divide on Homosexuality: Greater Acceptance in More Secular and Affluent Countries," (2013). Although Uruguay is also highly progressive with regards to same-sex unions, there is a lack of data to merit comparisons.

In most Latin American countries, neoliberalism's positive influence on the politics of recognition has been undeniable. As the presence of Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGOs) extends across the region alongside democratic consolidation in the late 20th century, a new era of identity politics has flourished with interest groups mobilizing to counter class, gender, ethnic, and sexual inequalities. Nevertheless, the acknowledgement of these inequalities has yet to materialize into transformative solutions addressing the material deprivation and resource redistribution within these groups. Advancing a solution, moreover, is made more complicated given that many of these inequalities are cross-cutting. As a result, neoliberalism poses an almost paradoxical influence in the fight for social justice – on one hand, it exhibits, at a discursive level, the collective oppressions experienced by groups. Conversely, it does not reveal the systemic inequalities endemic *within* groups. In fact, neoliberalism has a homogenizing propensity with regards to forming cognitive perceptions in group encounters. Put differently, it induces individuals to perceive 'others' based on their embodied characteristics and dilutes complex behavioural profiles into monolithic labels.

Still, in a region historically entrenched in patriarchalism, declining levels of homophobia is partly the product of neoliberal inception. As figure 1.1 reveals, the four most progressive countries in the region in terms of LGBT rights (Argentina, Chile, Mexico, and Brazil) have experimented, to some degree, with free market policies. Nonetheless, these figures obscures a darker side to

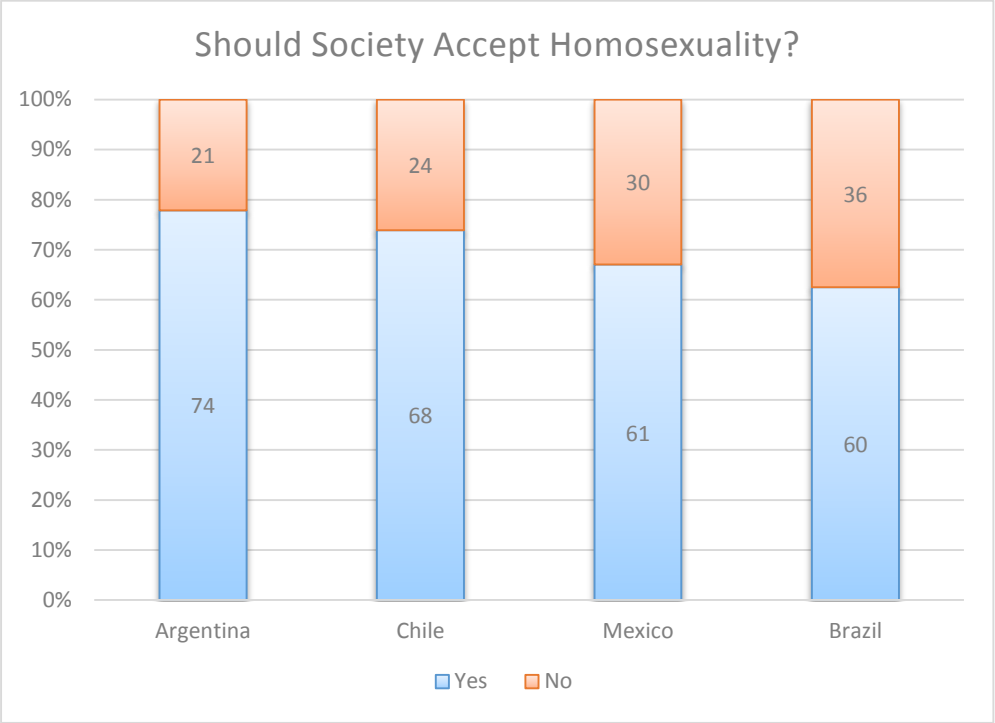

Figure 1.1 Societal Acceptance of Homosexuality

neoliberalism. Although Chile possesses the highest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita[16] in Latin America and has the second highest acceptance ratings for sexual minorities, it lags behind Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, and Uruguay in terms of legalizing same-sex marriage and implementation of anti-discrimination legislation for LGBTs. It is also worth mentioning that Chile was the first country in either the developed or developing world in which a comprehensive program of neoliberal reforms was initiated during the military regime of General Augusto Pincohet in the early 1980s. Despite the initial setbacks, the Chilean economy strengthened after the mid-1980s with annual GDP growth rates averaging above 8 percent between 1987 and 1997.[17] Due to

[16] The World Bank, "Data: Gdp Per Capita, Ppp (Current International $)," http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.PP.CD.
[17] Taylor, *From Pinochet to the 'Third Way': Neoliberalism and Social Transformation in Chile*, p.4.

its subsequent financial success, Chile has been upheld repeatedly as a paragon for neoliberal restructuring throughout the developing world. Even *The Economist* – a leading proponent of neoliberal internationalism – exalted the Chilean model as a blueprint for the developing world to observe and emulate:

> Not surprisingly, Chile has become the most studied country in Latin America. Visitors arrive from all over the world to see how they can emulate the Chilean transformation, and what they should be doing next.[18]

With increasingly open markets in an era of post-military rule, LGBT organizations surfaced in the early 1990s with the initial agenda of providing a support system for gay men in the face of the HIV epidemic. As the influence of the Catholic Church waned in the face of democratic consolidation and a growing human rights discourse, several organizations broadened their agenda to include the advancement of same-sex rights.[19] As a consequence of market liberalization, the influx of IGOs and Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) propagating for a more inclusive society have shifted societal attitudes considerably with regards to sexual minorities. In 1999, for instance, a nineteenth century anti-sodomy law criminalizing homosexuality was repealed from criminal statutes. Furthermore, the percentage of Chileans in support of same-sex marriage rose from 24% in 2004 to 54.9% in 2012.[20] A more recent

[18] "A New Prescription," *The Economist*, 14 September 2002.
[19] Tim Frasca, "Chile: Seizing Empowerment," in *The Politics of Sexuality in Latin America: A Reader on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights*, ed. Javier Corrales and Mario Pechemy (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 2005), p.261.
[20] Opus Gay, " Encuesta Refleja Amplia Aceptación a Derechos De Homosexuales En Chile," (2004); Gonzalo Velásquez, "Gran Avance: 54.9 Por Ciento Apoya En Chile El Matrimonio Igualitario," MOVILH, http://www.movilh.cl/gran-avance-54-9-por-ciento-apoya-en-chile-el-matrimonio-igualitario/.

poll, in fact, estimates support for same-sex marriage amongst youths to be as high as 70%.[21]

Although neoliberalism has fostered a more amiable climate for the 'coming out' of sexual minorities, it has also exacerbated other forms of social divisions in Chilean society. Consider the widening gap between the rich and poor. According to the World Bank, the richest 10% obtains 42% of the national income while the poorest 40% only 14.6%.[22] In fact, income inequality has become so entrenched in society that an inter-university investigation on social stratification uncovered that most Chileans could easily distinguish the country's elite based on their behaviour, culture, and education without taking actual income into consideration.[23] As Pinochet's neoliberal policies led to the privatization of several social welfare institutions such as education and healthcare, the lower classes and the poor have been systematically excluded from the same opportunities as the rich. Public education, for instance, although only marginally cheaper lacks adequate resources and facilities for its students.[24] Consequently, poorer students in public schools stand a less of a chance of improving their living conditions. According to government statistics, Santiago's poverty levels rose from 10.6% to 11.5% between 2007 and 2010.[25] As social mobility is gradually undermined, increasing polarization in the

[21] Telesur, "70% of Chilean Youth Support Same-Sex Marriage," (6th September 2014).
[22] Eduardo Porter, "Income Gap Shrinks in Chile, for Better or Worse," news release, 2nd December 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/03/business/economy/income-gap-shrinks-in-chile-for-better-or-worse.html?_r=0.
[23] Linn Helene Loken, "'Very High Inequality' in Chilean Society Breeds Resentment," The Santiago Times, http://santiagotimes.cl/very-high-inequality-in-chilean-society-breeds-resentment/.
[24] Taylor, *From Pinochet to the 'Third Way': Neoliberalism and Social Transformation in Chile*, p.89.
[25] Radhika Sanghani, "Santiago De Chile Shows Strong Divide between the Rich and Poor," The Santiago Times, http://en.mercopress.com/2010/07/22/santiago-de-chile-shows-strong-divide-between-the-rich-and-poor.

political system has translated into social unrest in recent years including the mobilization of student unions demanding public education reforms.

Such social injustices as ethnic discrimination against the indigenous Mapuche people in Southern Chile and widespread gender inequality has also been aggravated by neoliberalism in recent years. This is not to say that neoliberal policies is caused these issues. Rather, despite the propagation of human rights discourses in the post-Pinochet era in tandem with its neoliberal market practices, the country has yet to see a corresponding level of improvement with regards to gender discrimination. According to a World Bank study, Chile lags behind its neighbours Argentina and Peru in terms of female participation in the workforce.[26] Moreover, despite the improvements of women's rights since the restoration of democracy, a Global Gender Gap Report published by the World Economic Forum ranks Chile at a lowly 128 out of 142 countries in the wage equality category. The report further mentioned that Chilean women earn half as much as men because men generally seek employment in more lucrative sectors such as science and engineering whereas women prefer 'less competitive careers' and subsequently earn less money, despite possessing the same skills.[27] More than an imbalance of figures, these statistics points to a historical process of patriarchy embedded within the institutional practices of the state and internalized by its subjects as 'common sense'. But most importantly, these similar trends of gender, class, and ethnic inequality are also reflected within the LGBT community. Leadership positions within key organizations like MOVILH, MUMS, and Iguales, for instance, have

[26] The World Bank, "Gender Equality Data and Statistics: Chile," (2014).
[27] Valerie Dekimpe, "Gender Equality Poor in Chile Despite Improvement," The Santiago Times, http://santiagotimes.cl/gender-equality-poor-in-chile-despite-improvement/.

been typically dominated by men. Due to this, many critics have accused these organizations of putting the collective interests of gay men ahead of lesbian and transgender concerns. Class segregation within the LGBT community, furthermore, is evidenced by the centralization of gay establishments in upper-class neighbourhoods and the discrimination accorded to sexual minorities unable to emulate the 'gay lifestyle'. Thus, Chile makes for a fitting case for investigating the mirroring nature of societal divisions within the LGBT community.

Interestingly, even though democratization has led to the flourishing of numerous movements based on class, feminism, indigenous rights, social justice, and sexual rights in Chile, very few movements have explored the multiple intersecting experiences of these identities. The importance of studying these intersections should not be understated. Unlike the slogans of equality, not all injustices faced by sexual minorities and gender non-conforming individuals are similar. And although far from being the model of queer resistance, the rise of organizations like Iguales and MUMS have opened potential trajectories for a greater inclusion of peoples across gender, ethnic, class, political, and even sexual identities. In fact, the marked progress of Chile's LGBT movement compared to feminist, indigenous, and student movements as measured by the passing of anti-discrimination and AVP legislation appears to suggest that employing an inclusive frame through means of ambiguation has been strategic in countering the divisive discursive power of neoliberalism. In examining the role of the neoliberal state in perpetuating discriminatory discourses amongst gay and lesbian communities, this study of Chile endeavours to act as a

microcosm for the obstacles encountered by LGBT movements in post-colonial neoliberal societies and the possible strategies to be adopted in abating them.

Layout

This study is divided into four main chapters with the fifth chapter as the conclusion. Chapter one reviews the literature on divisions amongst sexual minorities. It points to gaps in the field and touches on the shortcomings of intersectionality. In chapter two, I outline the theory of heteronormative hegemony and its mechanisms. Additionally, I explain my methods and methodologies used in data collection, The third chapter demonstrates the role of neoliberalism in making sexual identities legible through the regulation of the 'pleasure economy'. I argue that heteronormative socialization is integral in the perpetuation of discriminatory discourses amongst sexual minorities. Lastly, in chapter four, I elaborate on the framing strategies of Iguales and MUMS in fostering more inclusive norms. Using data collected from the field, I demonstrate the importance of intersectional strategies in mobilizing volunteers across varying political, socio-economic, gender, and sexual identities.

One

Neoliberalism, Heteronormativity, and Queer Politics: The Story thus Far

How is the knowledge of "being gay" constructed? It speaks to the underlying core of identity and the mechanisms that constitute who "we" are. Additionally, it also accounts for the reproduction of social cleavages within the gay and lesbian communities. Hence, in investigating the epistemological roots of sexual identity, it is no surprise that social constructivism and post-structuralism have been the dominant paradigms for scholarly investigation. This study seeks to deepen the existing literature by highlighting the role of the neoliberal state in the mirroring effect of societal divisions on to sexual minority communities.

In particular, I argue that social conditioning is a vital causal factor to apprehending this mirroring effect. The neoliberal project in Chile has produced a culture of atomisation and exclusion through the creation of capitalist enterprises and newfound consumerism. This has inadvertently led to the propagation of rigid, homonormative identities and sub-cultures within the gay populace. Several LGBT organizations, in response, have employed queer strategies as a means of resisting the incursion of essentialist forces. I argue that

organizations that employ a combination of assimilationist and queer tactics are better positioned to achieve progressive LGBT legislations. This is evidenced by the examples of MUMS and Iguales which will be explained in further detail in chapter four.

The Mirroring Effect: Neoliberalism and Heteronormative Hegemony

Ludwig's theory of heteronormative hegemony aims to reconcile the tensions between historical materialism and discursive power in the study of sexual politics under the guise of cultural materialism. Cultural materialists posit that culture may be historical and political, but it is not influenced by capitalism's division of labour in any determinate way. Put differently, cultural materialists downplay the causal link in Marxism's systemic analysis between culture and economy and instead, focus on the struggle for discursive or cultural democracy within capitalism. Hence, synthesizing Judith Butler's theory of the 'heterosexual matrix' with Gramsci's notion of hegemony, Ludwig defines heteronormative hegemony as "a formation of state power that constitutes the binary division of sex in the form of masculinity and femininity as a criterion for the constitution of intelligible subjects".[28] In this study, I propose that heteronormative hegemony can be used as a theoretical framework in articulating the social relations perpetuating the forms of cleavages within gay and lesbian sub-cultures.

[28] Gundula Ludwig, "From the 'Heterosexual Matrix' to a 'Heteronormative Hegemony': Initiating a Dialogue between Judith Butler and Antonio Gramsci About Queer Theory and Politics," in *Hegemony and Heteronormativity: Revisiting 'the Political' in Queer Politics*, ed. Nikita Dhawan Maria Do Mar Castro Varela, and Antke Engel (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), p.53.

To Gramsci, hegemony solely refers to a power formation shaped by class relations.[29] Nonetheless, Ludwig criticizes Gramsci's lack of foresight in accounting for gender, ethnic, and sexual hierarchies in modern day societies. Instead, she invokes a post-structuralist take on hegemonic relations asserted by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe as "a relation where a particular group assumes the representation of universality by universalizing a particularity". [30] In other words, hegemony is not simply an act of co-opting the masses through modes of cultural production but also involves disempowering the agency of dissenters in challenging existing forms of knowledge. As Ludwig points out, "hegemonic worldviews are transformed into perceptions of 'normality' in what Gramsci describes as 'common sense'".[31] This is evidenced through acts of discrimination within the gay community against effeminate behaviour justified as "an act of preference" and "an exercise of free will". As victims of discursive and physical violence by masculinity, minority voices are frequently marginalized when addressing the origins of such discriminatory behaviour. When left unacknowledged, the legitimation and cultural reification of these discursive practices leads to the formation of essentialized identities through the self-policing and performance of 'desired' gender identities.

In addition, Ludwig grounds her theory of heteronormative hegemony by framing it as a formation of state power rooted in everyday practices of civil society. Rather than operating as a top-down fashion, it gains its stability and

[29] Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1985).
[30] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985).
[31] Ludwig, "From the 'Heterosexual Matrix' to a 'Heteronormative Hegemony': Initiating a Dialogue between Judith Butler and Antonio Gramsci About Queer Theory and Politics," p.55.

power "based on compromises that are articulated in social struggles".[32] On several counts, Ludwig's theoretical improvements of Butler's 'heterosexual matrix' have been well effected. Employing the concept of 'performativity', Butler argues that gender as a norm is not a single act but reiterated in multiple performing acts. It is through these reiterations of performative acts of masculinity and femininity through bodies that sexual difference becomes naturalized.[33] Despite her compelling argument, Ludwig accurately points out that Butler does not address the question "*how* and *through which techniques* the subject applies heteronormative scripts in everyday performative practices".[34] Nevertheless, Ludwig does not specify which spaces within civil society are struggles fought and meanings forged. Far from being homogenously (a)political, institutions and actors within civil society possess varying levels of politicization. Social Movement Organizations (SMOs), for instance, are more likely to challenge cultural norms of heterosexuality than, say, private businesses. Thus, in examining queer politics, it is vital to appreciate the disparate levels of political consciousness within the community and LGBT organizations. Furthermore, Ludwig paradoxically appears to emphasize the role of state power but rejects a top-down approach to heteronormative hegemony. Notwithstanding the significance of struggles at the societal level, the role of the neoliberal state in the social conditioning of actors has been neglected in her analysis. This is a vital consideration, I contend,

[32] Ibid., pp. 53-54.
[33] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).
[34] Ludwig, "From the 'Heterosexual Matrix' to a 'Heteronormative Hegemony': Initiating a Dialogue between Judith Butler and Antonio Gramsci About Queer Theory and Politics," pp. 48-49.

because it possesses explanatory potential in the forms and intensity of cleavages endemic within sexual minority communities across spatial contexts.

The process of constructing gay identity cannot be separated from the market forces of neoliberalism. Scholars such as Jon Binnie, Rosemary Hennesy, Brain Heaphy and J. Mayakovsky have highlighted the tensions and contradictions of neoliberalism's impact on LGBTQ politics. Notable are the effects on the representation of gay men and lesbians as model neoliberal citizens. Brian Heaphy, for instance, argues that: "'Undifferentiated' accounts of gay life tend to narrate relatively well-resourced and privileged experience as gay experience, and normatively promote this as a script for how gay life should be conceived and lived".[35] Such sweeping narratives effectively obscure poverty within queer communities.[36] Some scholars have even claimed that increasing gay visibility is not a consequence of queer liberation but rather, the result of lucrative emerging markets. In a study of the commodification of lesbians, Danae Clark observed that the increasing marketing of lesbian images is largely a consequence of capitalism's appropriation of "gay lifestyles" for mainstream audiences than a growing acceptance of homosexuality.[37] Visibility thus implies an acceptance of sexual minorities as consumer subjects rather than social subjects. Additionally, it reinforces the rigid binary of homo/hetero-sexuality by cementing perceptions of sexual minorities as a homogenous and monolithic group.

[35] Brian Heaphy, "Gay Identities and the Culture of Class," *Sexualities* 14 (2011).
[36] J. Mayakovsky, "Do We All Reek of the Commodity? Consumption and the Erasure of Poverty in Lesbian and Gay Studies," in *Out in Theory: The Emergence of Lesbian and Gay Anthropology*, ed. Ellen Lewin and William L. Leap (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002).
[37] Danae Clark, "Commodity Lesbianism," *Camera Obscura*, no. 25-26 (1991).

In her critically-acclaimed study of sexual identities, Hennessy highlights a commodity logic rooted in Marxist philosophy that explains growing visibility of sexual minorities as a matter of commodification and "a process that invariably depends on the lives and labour of invisible others".[38] Contrary to assertions by cultural materialists, Hennessy proclaims that discursive power alone is unable to account for essentialism and divisions within the gay and lesbian community. Instead, the structural organization of human labour according to class, ethnicity, and gender throughout history has implications on how cultural knowledge is constructed.[39] Drawing upon Karl Marx's concept of "fetishism", Hennessy demonstrates that capitalism often invites consumers to see the value of commodities "as if it were lodged in things themselves". [40] As such, it obscures the value of human labour and exploitative social relations undergirding much of the materialism of "the good life". Hence, capitalism invariably promotes a twin paradox in terms of group consciousness. On one hand, it exploits marginalized groups for their labour and fosters stigma toward gender, ethnic, sexual, and socio-economic minorities thereby heightening consciousness of their marginalization within these groups. On the other hand, it fosters a climate of apathy within privileged groups who fail to recognize the exploitative impacts of their consumerism on minorities.

Commodity fetishism, furthermore, is more entrenched in localities favourable to neoliberal access. Gay communities or enclaves are more common in urban areas than in the rural countryside. The proliferation of gay

[38] Rosemary Hennessy, *Profit and Pleasure: Sexual Identities in Late Capitalism* (London: Routledge, 2000), p.95.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 5 (New York: International, 1976).

bars and nightclubs across Latin America, for example, filled with men presenting themselves in very similar ways, listening to the same music, and consuming the same recreational drugs is consistent with the exportation of North American gay culture. Termed as the "global gay", this universalizing phenomenon of gay enclave culture is a profitable industry for both local businesses and the global tourism industry.[41] Nevertheless, neo-colonialists contend that the importation of Euro-American popular culture, mass media, and tourism contains adverse effects on the collective imaginary of local queer populations. One effect would be the marginalization of lesbians, transgenders, and even gay men, who do not conform to the ideal sexualized body images within these spaces. In fact, feminists have shown that both bodies and spaces are bound into power/knowledge relationships. Gillian Rose posits that "particular imagined spatialities are constitutive of specific subjectivities. Identities are in part constituted by the kind of space through which they imagine themselves."[42] In short, we need to pay attention to the *geographies* of neoliberalism because place is embedded in the representation of the body's particular ethnicity, age, class, gender, and sexuality. Gay tourism, for instance, is frequently defined in relation to body and sex. As an anonymous gay male describes, a typical gay tourist destination would include: "Nude bathing; lots of partying and drinking; sunbathing; trying to look good and showing off. [That's] a summer holiday."[43] Hence, the significance of investigating gay

[41] Dennis Altman, "Global Gaze/Global Gays," in *Sexual Identities, Queer Politics*, ed. Mark Blasius (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001).
[42] Gillian Rose, "Making Space for the Female Subject of Feminism: The Spatial Subversions of Holzer, Kruger, and Sherman," in *Mapping the Subject: Geographies of Cultural Transformation*, ed. Steven Pile and Nigel Thrift (London: Routledge, 1995).
[43] Annette Pritchard et al., "Sexuality and Holiday Choices: Conversations with Gay and Lesbian Tourists," *Leisure Studies* 19, no. 4 (2000).

tourism as an embodied practice is crucial because many gay tourists do tourism by a process of "feeling by doing" through their bodies at gay resorts, circuit parties, pride parades, and festivals.[44] In many neoliberal cities, gay tourism has been a major force in transforming the local culture of LGBT communities. As increasing amounts of gay tourists flock to these destinations, the demand for gay cultural products and experiences would displace the original way of life and meanings within these communities.[45] Scholars allege that the spread of gay tourism products within local communities have produced tensions between the objectives of community organizations organizing such events and the commercial ambitions of mainstream firms that sponsor them.[46] One such consequence is the prioritization of class interests of gay and lesbian small business owners above the collective interests of the community. Jon Binnie, for example, describes how marchers for gay equality in Warsaw were perceived by leftist workers as privileged middle-class consumers. The neoliberal policies of the Polish government led to the material dispossession of many workers, intensifying class cleavages and led many people to draw affinities between LGBT liberation and neoliberal politics. Binnie, nonetheless, criticizes this framing of marchers as neoliberal consumers as "it renders invisible working class queer people who have also suffered from material dispossession under transition".[47] In spite of the tenuous presumption of

[44] Gordon Waitt and Kevin Markell, *Gay Tourism: Culture and Context* (New York: The Haworth Press, 2006).
[45] Ibid.
[46] Nigel J. Morgan Annette Pritchard, Diane Sedgely, Andrew Jenkins, "Reaching out to the Gay Tourist: Opportunities and Threats in an Emerging Market Segment," *Tourism Management* 19, no. 3 (1998).
[47] Jon Binnie, "Neoliberalism, Class, Gender, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Politics in Poland," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 27, no. 2 (2013): p.249.

participants of the march as neoliberal consumers, there is a further need for investigation into the sources of this cognitive framing. This cognitive bias is critical, I argue, as it tells an important story on the processes of "othering" queer individuals and its subsequent effect on the internalized homophobia and its manifestation in the divisive culture within LGBT communities. Furthermore, the literature is silent on the variation of types of discrimination across space. For instance, why is racism more common among gay men in Singapore whereas classism is the main form of division within the gay community in Santiago?[48] How can heteronormative hegemony be refined to better account for this variation?

The literature on cognitive processes of identity formation may be able to afford some answers. Such scholars as Amy Page and Lauren Berlant point to the role of social conditioning as a critical influence on how individuals derive their identities. In a study of women's culture in the US, Berlant acknowledges the influence of the market in solidifying a common identity amongst women. Women's culture, according to Berlant, is a product of an "intimate public" whereby "a market opens up to a bloc of consumers, claiming to circulate texts and things that express those people's particular core interests and desires".[49] In other words, the consciousness of a women's identity is evoked through the circulation of images, narratives, texts, and products via the market that deals with the struggle of women in patriarchal societies. This cultural phenomenon, nonetheless, is unrepresentative of the experiences of

[48] Leow Yangfa, *I Will Survive: Personal Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Stories in Singapore* (Singapore: Monsoon Books, 2011).
[49] Lauren Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008), p.5.

ethnic, sexual, class and gender transitioning minorities as it is predicated on commoditized relations among subjects who are defined "not as actors in history but as persons who shop and feel".[50] Hence, in perpetuating a white, middle-class privilege, the culture of the intimate public espouses essentialist tendencies of rendering minority experiences invisible. Most intriguingly, is the scarce acknowledgement of this reality amongst victims of this white, middle-class privilege; marginalized groups rarely challenge this "white gaze" and often times perpetuate such unequal structures by actively participating in them. Thus, what accounts for their widespread co-optation?

Amy Page and James Peacock highlight the model of heteronormative gender socialization as a critical influence in the performance of gay, lesbian, and transgender identities. As heteronormativity privileges the notion that sexual attraction should be based on one's gender identity, males and females are characterized as "appropriate and complementary sexual partners for the purpose of procreation".[51] Even though gender and sexuality are separate constructs, masculinity and femininity are heralded as the ideal norms of behaviour for men and women respectively. The institutionalization of sex and gender in binary terms alongside the cultural devaluation of alternative sexualities becomes embedded in our psyche as it is reified and legitimized in images, popular discourse, politics, institutions, and our social interactions. In turn, gays and lesbians seeking to explore their sexuality often defer to heteronormative gendered frameworks as a means of situating their identities. As a consequence, sexual minorities subconsciously perpetuate the normative

[50] Ibid.

[51] Amy Dellinger Page and James R. Peacock, "Negotiating Identities in a Heteronormative Context," *Journal of Homosexuality* 60, no. 4 (2013): pp. 640-41.

superiority of masculinity over femininity within their communities as opposed to challenging them. In doing so it extends the same structure of gender, racial, and class-based oppressions within gay and lesbian communities.

Nevertheless, psycholoanalytic accounts of group identities are unable to explain cases where sexual minorities and gender transitioning peoples do not subscribe to such rigid binaries. What distinguishes them from the mainstream gay and lesbian population? What accounts for this slippage in social conditioning? I contend that such individuals possess a form of self-reflexivity that is rare in the main LGBT populations. Empowered with an understanding of the oppressive nature of heteronormative institutions, they employ their "free wills" in challenging the superstructures and capitalist institutions that perpetuate the stereotypical thinking and label-driven culture within gay and lesbian communities. Preferring to be known as queer, these actors [52] - as activists, politicians, poets, artists or the common (wo)man – see internalized discriminatory discourses by the very victims of sexist society as an insidious extension of heterosexist society and seek to undo these discourses by destabilizing existing group identities and structural hierarchies that defines *everyone's* sense of self.

Strategies of Queering Heteronormative Hegemony

To understand the complex and multi-faceted approaches to addressing problems of discrimination amongst sexual minorities, it is critical to

[52] Identification as queer in this instance refers to the strategies of political engagement in the advancement of LGBT rights as opposed to one's sexual orientation. A number of interviewees I spoke to in Santiago identified with queer politics but were of sexual identities ranging from heterosexuals, homosexuals, bisexuals, pansexuals etc. Thus, in this instance, the term 'queer' is in reference to the politics of reclaiming one's selfhood against a heteronormative setting as opposed to being concerned with one's sexuality.

distinguish between the strategies of gay-identity and queer politics. The vital distinction between gay-identity and queer politics lies in its treatment of the homo-hetero dichotomy. Gay-identity politics is seen as an affirmative remedy which aims to revalue gay and lesbian identities in response to homophobia and heterosexism. Queer politics, in contrast, is often perceived as a transformative remedy as it aims to deconstruct the homo-hetero binary.[53] Actors engaging in gay-identity politics often perceive homosexuality as a cultural positivity with its own idiosyncratic content that distinguishes it from heterosexuality. Achieving sexual equality, in this instance, requires a mere recognition of these distinctions.[54] Queer politics, conversely, sees homosexuality as the constructed and subordinate correlate of heterosexuality. Thus, it challenges the hegemonic worldview of the gender and sex binary as a naturally given truth.

To many queer theorists and activists, assimilationist strategies of gay-identity politics, such as advocating for same-sex marriage, serves to strengthen the normative power of heteronormativity rather than undermine it. Heteronormativity, as an ideological tool of coercion, privileges monogamous heterosexual relations for procreative purposes and disparages the status of non-conforming sexual subjects through the process of 'coming out'. In particular, 'reproductive heteronormativity' as a process of 'being normal' involves participating in heterosexual relations and procreation, "and it is in terms of that norm that society is made: legal structures, religious structures, affective

[53] Warner, "Introduction: Fear of a Queer Planet."
[54] Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition* (London: Routledge, 1997), p.24.

structures, residential structures, everything".[55] Thus, queer theorists are sceptical of the subversive capacities of same-sex marriage as it corresponds to the logic of reproductive heteronormativity. Rather than dismantling the institutions rewarding procreation, same-sex marriage bolsters the normative violence[56] conferred upon non-conforming individuals (regardless of sexuality). Furthermore, queer theorists view same-sex marriage as, at best, a 'deviation from the norm' as opposed to as an act of subversion. This is because challenging the norm is still being defined in relation to the norm. Moreover, as Butler argues, norms rely on deviations for their continued existence.[57] Hence, assimilationist strategies of gay-identity politics risks propagating a form of 'homonormativity', or a kind of politics "that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption".[58] Furthermore, assimilationist gay politics tends to essentialize the wide range of discrimination encountered by sexual minorities as a single experience faced by a majority of its members – typically middle-class gay males of the majority ethnic group. In doing so, this approach often obfuscates the myriad lived oppressions of ethnic minorities, women, transgenders, and the

[55] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Feminism and Human Rights," in *The Present as History: Critical Perspectives on Global Power*, ed. Nermeen Shaikh (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), p.193.

[56] Normative violence is defined as "the violence of particular norms that determine not only who ultimately counts as human, but also regulates what is legible and intelligible within a specific framework". See Maria do Mar Castro Varela and Nikita Dhawan, "Normative Dilemmas and the Hegemony of Counter-Hegemony," in *Hegemony and Heteronormativity: Revisiting 'the Political' in Queer Politics*, ed. Nikita Dhawan Maria do Mar Castro Varela, and Antke Engel (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), p.95.

[57] Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (London: Routledge, 2004), p.42.

[58] Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003), p.50.

poor. For instance, in many post-colonial developing societies, the ability to seize one's agency in claiming to be gay is a form of privilege that is more accessible to individuals from a middle-class background. Due to the culture of homophobia, overcoming the fear of rejection requires access to some level of physical, financial, and psychological resources. Frequently, these vital resources are beyond the reach of sexual minorities from poorer backgrounds often leading to depression, self-harm, suicide, and the spread of sexual diseases such as HIV. As a result, queer theorists and activists reason that uprooting heteronormativity requires a critical interrogation of the ways in which heterosexuality has been historically entrenched in the distribution of economic resources, social control, and cultural power.[59] The agenda of queer politics, therefore, must work beyond claiming sexual rights and should include alleviating other forms of social violence, among them racism, poverty, gender discrimination, neoliberalism, imperialism, and international division of labour.

But herein lies the dilemma of the queer strategy: How can queer activists advocate simultaneously to abolish sexual differentiation while valorising the specificity of heterosexual privilege? In other words, how does the pursuit of equality which follows the eventual disavowal of group identities occur when it requires groups to be conscious of such definitions in the first place? According to Nancy Fraser, this depends on the source of injustice. She highlights two main forms of injustice, socioeconomic and cultural. The former pertains to exploitation and economic marginalization of the poor as embedded in the political-economic structure of society. Thus, the solution typically entails

[59] Chrys Ingraham, "The Heterosexual Imaginary: Feminist Sociology and Theories of Gender," in *Queer Theory/Sociology*, ed. Steven Seidmann (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1996).

a transformative policy of redistribution throughout the economy. Cultural injustice, in contrast, deals with the subjugation of a group's interpretation, representation, and expression of its identity. As the source of oppression lies in the devaluation of identity, the panacea follows a simple recognition of the group's identity. Nonetheless, the dichotomy between these two forms of injustice are purely analytical. In practice, the two are intricately intertwined.[60] Countering any form of institutionalized oppression, as a consequence, requires the twin approaches of redistribution and recognition. But a key challenge in tackling sexual and gender based oppression lies in articulating a universal strategy that addresses the panoply of discrimination encountered by ethnic minorities, transgenders, intersex, disabled, and the poor. Calling on such policies of recognition as legalisation of same-sex marriages and anti-discrimination laws may enfeeble the climate of homophobia for a rough majority of sexual minorities. But such measures do little to solve other forms of injustices such as racism, classism, misogyny, ableism, and fat-shaming within the LGBTQ community. Furthermore, adopting an affirmative recourse to a simplistic politics of gay identity promotes a culture of homonormativity that ultimately serves to dilute minority voices.

Queer scholars and activists contend that rather than legal change, a greater emphasis should be exerted on transforming hegemonic worldviews that occur "on the level of social micro-structures through counter-knowledge, counter-practices and strategies of equivocation".[61] Ludwig advocates for intervention "in everyday practices – in schoolbooks, academic curricula,

[60] Fraser, *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition*, pp. 18-19.
[61] Antke Engel, *Wider Die Eindeutigkeit: Sexualitat Und Geschlecht in Fokus Queerer Politik* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2002).

advertisements, street names, 'private' conversations in the workplace and the architectures of bathrooms" that can queer heteronormative worldviews.[62] Nonetheless, the importance of reforming legal provisions should not be understated. In many authoritarian regimes, challenging heteronormative worldviews at the personal level can only take place if there are no legal obstacles for the acknowledgement and organization of sexual minorities. For instance, Section 377 - a penal code criminalizing sex between mutually consenting adult men – is a constitutional provision in many former British colonies. In countries like Singapore and Malaysia where Section 377 has yet to be repealed, the article is manipulated as an instrument to curtail the political mobilization of queer activists. Thus, LGBT organizations are typically confined to dispensing functional assistance to members of the community such as counselling, support groups, HIV prevention, and safe sex advice instead of actively campaigning to transform outdated heteronormative worldviews.[63] Such cases, therefore, signifies the need for legal reforms to precede organizational engagement in daily practices. By inculcating a more amiable political culture through legal sanctions, the likelihood of altering heterosexist perspectives will increase. Moreover, queer scholars denouncing same-sex marriages as complicit with the hegemonic (heteronormative) order fail to appreciate the historical and contextual benefits it derives to particular individuals. Maria do Mar Castro Varela and Nikita Dhawan point out:

> If heterosexual marriage functions subtly and invisibly, by presenting itself as a common sense and bringing respectability, social status and material benefits

[62] Ludwig, "From the 'Heterosexual Matrix' to a 'Heteronormative Hegemony': Initiating a Dialogue between Judith Butler and Antonio Gramsci About Queer Theory and Politics," p.59.
[63] Audrey Yue, "Queer Singapore: A Critical Introduction," in *Queer Singapore: Illiberal Citizenship and Mediated Cultures*, ed. Jun Audrey Yue and Zubillaga-Pow (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012).

> to those who are permitted to enter this institution, then same-sex marriage cam be read as a contestation of hegemonic heteronormativity. It forces hegemonic institutions to rethink their structures and to reconsider who has the right to be a member, including on what grounds and in what permutation and combination.[64]

Same-sex marriages, in other words, serves to subvert the heterosexual monopoly over privileges. Additionally, it allows for social mobility and greater welfare rights for disadvantaged groups. The legalization of same-sex marriage in several European countries, for instance, affords queer migrants the opportunity of escaping persecution from their home countries through acquiring citizenship rights through marriage with EU citizens.[65] Indeed, it could be argued that same-sex marriage and other legal reforms performs a vital function in revealing the invisibility and exclusion of non-normative sexualities within heteronormative socio-political structures. Varela and Dhawan argue that rather than an instrument of co-optation, same-sex marriages acts as a form of 'passive revolution' that "could result in the transformation of the idea of partnerships".[66] This is consistent with Gramsci's strategy of counter-hegemony through a 'war of position' which involves a political struggle in the form of passive resistance, boycott, and an organic process of transformation through education. Such methods, Gramsci asserts, involves a gradual rather than sudden transformation of social relations through undermining the consent of the masses to the ruling class.[67] In 2006, for instance, the marriage of two transsexual lesbians in Girona caused controversy among queers and

[64] Dhawan, "Normative Dilemmas and the Hegemony of Counter-Hegemony," p.104.
[65] Ibid., p.105.
[66] Ibid., p.115.
[67] David Forgacs, ed. *The Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935* (New York: New York University Press, 2000).

conservatives alike, though of course for very distinct reasons.[68] Same-sex marriages, thus, can provide real-life lessons on the social constructs of gender roles and induce greater tolerance toward non-heteronormative identities.

Despite increased social mobility and an extension of welfare privileges offered through same-sex marriage, such perspectives nonetheless fail to interrogate why marriage in most instances is utilized as a legitimating institution for the distribution of such provisions in the first place. Furthermore, arguments for same-sex marriage often ignore the normative violence directed against polyamorous and asexual individuals whose intimate desires may not conform to monogamous frameworks. In spite of the benefits, an activist strategy that focuses exclusively on legalising same-sex marriage and other legislative reforms further risks disempowering the agency of average individuals in enacting societal change. What strategies can movements adopt in queering heteronormative worldviews through everyday lived experience? Is there a strategy that movements can employ that avoids essentialist reproductions of normative worldviews?

Intersectionality, as a critical approach to deconstructing social categories, has gained traction in feminist scholarship. Theoretically conceived as a counter-hegemonic response to the imposition of white, heterosexual, middle-class perspectives in feminist movements across the US and Europe, intersectionality refers to "the mutually constructed nature of social division and the ways these are experienced, reproduced, and resisted in everyday life".[69] In recent years, intersectionality has been increasingly employed in queer

[68] Dhawan, "Normative Dilemmas and the Hegemony of Counter-Hegemony," p.107.
[69] Leslie McCall, "The Complexity of Intersectionality," *Signs* 30, no. 3 (2005).

movements as a means of creating social awareness of the multiple inequalities and injustices experienced by individuals from varying ethnic, class, gender, and sexual backgrounds. More than a theoretical paradigm, intersectionality focuses on the lived experiences of such oppressions as an embodied reality.[70] This often entails a two-pronged approach of providing oppressed individuals with the appropriate avenues and means to articulate their experiences and convincing unaffected individuals to listen and acknowledge these views. Eventually, this process allows for the redress of unseen structural privileges that serves to perpetuate various forms of discrimination. Moreover, the participation of unaffected 'allies' can be important for movements as such individuals can exploit their privileged status to further legitimise the cause of the oppressed community. Straight allies, for example, that join LGBT or queer organizations can assist in queering heteronormative hegemony in several ways. Not only do they strengthen the credibility of the movement through the implication of 'outsider support', they serve to 'ambiguate' the notion of sexuality at the micro level. In addition to more tangible means of support such as monetary donations and political participation in protest marches, heterosexual allies can advance the movement by subverting the hetero-homo dichotomy. This strategy, according to Ian Ayres and Jennifer Gerarda Brown, requires being hesitant in quickly clarifying their sexuality when broached by outsiders of their support for LGBT causes. In other instances, it could be as simple as a few choice words. A woman referring to her husband, for instance, could refer to him not as her 'husband' but as her 'spouse' ("My spouse and I are academics"). In doing so, she leaves open the question of whether her spouse

[70] Taylor, "Complexities and Complications: Intersections of Class and Sexuality," p.37.

is a man or woman.[71] Moreover, as I will argue, heterosexual allies can also mitigate discriminatory discourses within gay and lesbian communities. In my examination of two LGBT organizations in Chile in chapter four, I find that heterosexual allies are able to alter the norms of interaction between gay and lesbian members, thereby fostering a more inclusive queer identity within these organizations. Heterosexual allies, therefore, possess not only the capacity to reform heteronormativity in society, but also the leverage in alleviating discriminatory impulses within gay and lesbian communities.

Despite the efficacy of intersectionality, several issues on a practical level concerning the application of an intersectional approach emerge. One such concern posed by Nira Yuval-Davis is which social divisions matter: why should they matter and to what extent should they be considered a structural problem in need of redress?[72] Secondly, as Patricia Clough, Steven Seidman, James Joseph Dean and Diana Fuss have pointed out, the process of multiplying identity categories indefinitely can end up reproducing the same essentialist epistemology of experience framework that requires focusing on a single identity category.[73] As Dean elaborates: "Multiplying identity categories ends up reproducing a particular social standpoint that must assert and privilege some set of identity categories over others. Hence, intersectional identity categories end up reproducing the exclusionary effects they had sought to correct for

[71] Ian Ayres and Jennifer Gerarda Brown, *Straightforward: How to Mobilize Heterosexual Support for Gay Rights* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp. 6-11.
[72] Nira Yuval-Davis, "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13, no. 3 (2006).
[73] Patricia Ticineto Clough, *Feminist Thought: Desire, Power, and Academic Discourse* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1994); Steven Sediman, *Contested Knowledge: Social Theory Today* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007); Diana Fuss, ed. *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1991); James Joseph Dean, "Thinking Intersectionality: Sexualities and the Politics of Multiple Identities," in *Theorizing Intersectionality and Sexuality*, ed. Sally Hines Yvette Taylor, and Mark E. Casey (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

through their very creation."[74] In other words, the identities that are often acknowledged are a product of socially constructed processes situated within a socio-historical context. Despite the seemingly uneven distribution of privilege accorded to certain identities, this study contends that engaging in these socio-historically contingent identities are beneficial in the long-term in addressing the structural inequalities affecting these societies such as racism, sexism, and poverty.

Additionally, although feminist scholars have deliberated on the strengths and weaknesses of operationalizing intersectionality as a lived experience, there is a dearth of research on the practicalities of intersectionality in neoliberal societies. The rationale for the neoliberal peculiarity is premised on the shortcomings of modernization theory's hypothesis that higher levels of economic growth would engender a more politically conscious society demanding greater political and civil rights.[75] Contrary to the prognostication of modernization theorists, several countries in Asia including China and Singapore were capable of staving pressures for democratization while achieving staggering economic growth rates. Berlant explains that rather than evoking the political consciousness of the citizenry, increased standards of living can inadvertently lead to the depoliticization of society. This is due to the ideology of the 'good life' that asserts that political mobilization declines as individuals view domestic order and security as vital to securing one's economic well-being.[76] On a micro-level, this translates to less incentives for

[74] "Thinking Intersectionality: Sexualities and the Politics of Multiple Identities," p.123.
[75] Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).
[76] Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

championing the causes of social justice as more and more people become indoctrinated into the material pursuits of the capitalist economy. Hence, as I contend, practicing intersectionality may be problematic in neoliberal settings as beneficiaries of the system may be reluctant to acknowledge the structural inequalities privileging their identities. Rather than renouncing their privilege, they might seek to defend it by rationalizing their position through a Darwinian logic of 'survival of the fittest' (for example, '*x ethnic group*' have always been poor because laziness has been in their blood).

Thus, this study seeks to elucidate how LGBT organizations and actors negotiate the challenges of neoliberal settings in overcoming heteronormative hegemony. How do they adopt intersectional practices that generates norms of ambiguity and empathy in neoliberal settings? What are the implications for a 'queer identity' and how do they differ from gay and lesbian identities found in 'scene spaces'

Two

Heteronormative Hegemony: Theory and Methodology

In the previous chapter, a question was raised: How do LGBT organizations mobilize followers in light of the challenges presented by capitalism? Some of those challenges include a mirroring effect where societal discrimination involving gender, ethnicity, and class are reproduced within gay and lesbian communities. Other problems include the stability of such discriminatory rhetoric where capitalism thwarts acknowledgement of structural privileges. In this chapter, I will outline the theory of heteronormative hegemony, which I argue is able to account for the types of divisions within gay and lesbian communities through a 'mirroring effect'. This mechanism, as I will demonstrate, is effected through a process of social conditioning facilitated by neoliberal institutions. As such, the theory posits that the kinds of divisions prevalent within LGBT communities is determined by pre-existing societal cleavages. Heteronormative hegemony, essentially, is a theory to account for the discriminatory discourses and practices inherent within gay and lesbian cultures. Specifically, such discriminatory practices include both public and private realms ranging from employment opportunities to dating preferences.

To substantiate my theoretical framework, I will begin with an account of the methods and methodological assumptions of this study. Between June and August 2014, I spent two months in Santiago, Chile collecting a range of primary and secondary data including in-depth interviews, newspaper articles, brochures, and first-hand accounts of events ranging from pride parades, nightlife in gay bars and clubs, and meetings in LGBT organizations. Issues such as navigating a field site as an outsider and the implications of interpreting culture through these data will be discussed in subsequent sections.

Heteronormative Hegemony: A Discursive Theory of Hegemony

As Ludwig asserts, heteronormative hegemony is a power formation that accounts for the prevalence of heteronormativity as a legitimate model for organizing our sexual identity. Exploiting this framework, I contend that heteronormative hegemony can also be employed to account for divisions within gay and lesbian communities. This is because discrimination within LGBT communities are typically perpetuated by sexual minorities who have largely been socialized within heteronormative institutions. As discourse in heteronormative institutions are loaded with social hierarchies involving gender, ethnicity, and class, sexual minorities brought up in such systems consciously and subconsciously internalize these hierarchies and reproduce them within their communities. Heteronormative hegemony, moreover, is also a power formation that renders bodies and subjects intelligible. In other words, it is a useful heuristic tool for deconstructing the semiotics and behavioural traits within gay and lesbian sub-cultures. Understanding the unique cultural

characteristics within gay, lesbian, and transgender communities can tell us a lot about the complex pressures of complying with group norms whilst navigating one's sexual identity.

The concept of heteronormative hegemony derives from the mutually constitutive terms 'heteronormativity' and 'hegemony'. On one hand, heteronormativity often implies a hegemonic order or regime, and on the other hand, hegemonic socio-economic and political relations are perceived as organized in consonance with heteronormative standards.[77] The amalgamation of the two terms seeks to highlight how intersecting power relations between the bourgeoisie and patriarchy produces knowledge that co-opts subjects into the social and political order. In essence, the concepts of heteronormativity and hegemony are mutually interconnected.[78] For the purposes of this study, heteronormative hegemony is defined as a power formation that affirms heteronormativity as a desired social norm by 'seizing the consent of the masses'. It is important to clarify what is meant by 'seizing the consent of the masses'. According to Gramsci, garnering the consent of the people is a critical pillar of hegemony and is achieved through a combination of economic domination plus moral and intellectual leadership.[79] Indeed, it would be

[77] Maria do Mar Castro Varela, Nikita Dhawan, and Antke Engel, "Hegemony and Heteronormativity: Revisiting 'the Political' in Queer Politics," in *Hegemony and Heteronormativity: Revisiting 'the Political' in Queer Politics*, ed. Nikita Dhawan Maria do Mar Castro Varela, and Antke Engel (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 1-3.

[78] This is because heteronormativity encompasses more than hierarchical power relations of monogamy between two genders. Ludwig alludes to it as a binary worldview in which particular sets of relations are concretized. Thus, oriental notions of race, for instance, often assumes heteronormative undertones evidenced by colonial logics of "the west taming the east" and the exoticism of non-white bodies and cultures. The point of heteronormative hegemony, therefore, is to unveil the idea that much of our social relations (class, ethnicity, and sex) are embedded in gendered frameworks.

[79] Jackson Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities," *American Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (1985): p.568.

erroneous to presume that consent is spontaneously *given* by the masses, as espoused by traditional Marxist thought. Rather, for Gramsci, consent is a manufactured ideology of the bourgeois state contrived in alliance with actors in civil society. The masses, in this instance, are coopted through historically produced bourgeois ideas, values, norms, perceptions, beliefs, sentiments and prejudices which they internalize as 'common sense'.[80] Gramsci argues that civil society plays a critical role in sustaining hegemony as it functions to legitimize dominant discourses while delegitimizing alternative visions. Vital organizations performing such roles are typically thought of as benevolent and non-political such as the church, schools, and the media. As regards to sexuality, these institutions inadvertently propagate the agenda of reproductive heterosexuality as norm. Over time, the daily production of hegemony through quotidian activities and interactions becomes so deeply entrenched that it becomes invisible as a form of control and self-policing.

Despite the prominence of Gramsci's theory, I contend that such a narrow conception of hegemony is inadequate in accounting for the modes of consensus production inherent within heteronormative institutions. It has been argued that hegemonic rule does not only rely on leaders or political parties but also on socio-cultural concepts, shared norms, and habituated normalities. For instance, heteronormativity can become hegemonic without any explicit claims to leadership.[81] To better understand how heteronormativity affects the discriminatory impulses of sexual subjects, it is critical to distinguish the sphere of politics from 'the political'. According to Mouffe, politics involves "the set

[80] Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*.
[81] Varela, Dhawan, and Engel, "Hegemony and Heteronormativity: Revisiting 'the Political' in Queer Politics," p.4.

of practices and institutions through which an order is created". 'The political', in contrast, implies the "*processes, regimes,* or *logics* of language, knowledge and power inherent in doing politics".[82] Reflecting on the regimes of norms and normalization, I argue, is important as it explains the epistemological conditions in which consensus is forged. Moreover, it accounts for the wider discursive forces that orientates the array of habits, instincts, behaviours and values that influences the performance of an individual's gender and sexual identity.

As such, Laclau and Mouffe's discursive theory of hegemony is instrumental in unpacking the regimes and norms influencing the performance of sexual identity. Based on the concept of articulation, it posits that hegemonic relations are established when an identity is modified as a result of articulatory practice.[83] Politicization, therefore, occurs when articulation results in misrepresenting or pejoratively characterizing certain identities that ultimately leads to the marginalization of minority groups. This understanding of power is consistent with Michel Foucault's analysis on the processes of production of consent. Foucault claims that we should not ask why and how subjects agree to being subjugated but rather should concentrate on how hegemony produces subjects. In other words, how are certain bodies, gestures, pleasures, and desires constituted as heterosexual and thereby as normative? To him, subjects are not 'inert or consenting targets of power'. Instead, "power passes through individuals. It is not applied to them".[84] Hence, examining the power of

[82] Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political* (London: Verso, 2005), p.9.
[83] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, p.105.
[84] Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended* (New York: Picador, 2003), p.45.

articulating social relations is vital to apprehending the discriminatory impulses within lesbian and gay communities.

Against the backdrop of the industrial age, societal institutions such as the church, media, and schools played a pivotal role in this process of articulation. Foucault and Emilio point out that the normative ascent of heterosexuality alongside the subsequent denigration of alternative sexualities coincides with the historical development of capitalism.[85] Thus, capitalism is integral in the reproduction and stabilization of societal cleavages within gay and lesbian cultures in two ways: representation and imitation. As a whole, both mechanisms comprise the backbone of consent within the framework of heteronormative hegemony. Firstly, representation involves projecting societal hierarchies through various organs of the state. Institutions that penetrate the daily lives of individual citizens tend to project certain hegemonic norms and worldviews concerning gender, ethnic, and class hierarchies. Normative worldviews concerning the superiority of masculinity over femininity, or the cultural superiority of whites over other ethnicities, for instance, are ubiquitously propagated and internalized by individuals through narratives and discourses in schools, religious institutions, and the media. This hegemonic system, moreover, retains its stability due to the power of capitalism in shaping the cognitive capacities of its subjects. In other words, capitalism does not merely function to internalize these hierarchical distinctions, but also aspires to control how individuals perceive and make sense of them by influencing their thought processes and value systems. In neoliberal societies like Chile, the

[85] *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978); Emilio, "Capitalism and Gay Identity."

hegemonic pursuit of material wealth and social mobility colours the perceptions of ethnic, class, and gender relations in society. Due to this social conditioning, sexual minorities subconsciously extrapolate these hierarchical relations within their communities whilst situating their identities. Imitation, as a second process, entails the performative practice of these cognitive beliefs in daily interactions, rituals, and activities. These cognitive perspectives regarding gender, ethnicity, and class identities are premised not on an objective, but inter-subjective reality instantiated by capitalist discourses. Within gay and lesbian enclaves, sexual minorities may perform these identities for reasons ranging from gaining support from peers to devising methods to cope with the stigma attached to homosexuality. Over time, the constant reification of these hegemonic discourses in daily livelihoods and interactions eventuates into a norm or 'taken-for-granted reality'. More significantly, these cultural norms retains its stability through capitalist logics. Attempts to point out structural privilege, for instance, are often met with scepticism or are justified through a Darwinian logic of 'survival of the fittest'. Given the lack of acknowledgement accorded to these structural privileges, patterns of discriminatory practices persist within lesbian and gay spaces, thereby marginalizing those failing to conform. Therefore, in a community wherein the cultural regime is predicated on self-interest and exclusion, how do social organizations overcome the challenge of mobilizing a community with multiple intersecting identities?

Fostering a more inclusive culture, I argue, is central to resolving the divisions posed by heteronormative hegemony. Such an approach would entail reforming the logic or regime that undergirds social relations within gay and lesbian spaces. Although this would involve the tricky problem of calling

attention to structural privileges, the primary objective does not necessarily require achieving complete equality in society. It merely necessitates empowering individuals with the procedural means to articulate their personal oppressions and inculcating a culture of empathy in which minority issues are addressed equally as those of the majority. Using the case of Chile, I will demonstrate how some LGBT organizations have adapted intersectional approaches within capitalist institutions in engineering a more inclusive culture within their spaces. As previously discussed, advancing an intersectional approach implies highlighting "the mutually constructed nature of social division and the ways these are experienced, reproduced, and resisted in everyday life".[86] Although it might be perceived that neoliberal systems are inimical to such an approach, I contend that capitalist values and institutions can be adjusted to accommodate norms of empathy. This strategy, nevertheless, would require a combination of multiple approaches that includes celebrating minority identities, forging alliances with other movements, incorporating heterosexuals amongst its ranks, and conducting active grassroots campaign employing the use of technology and social media. However, such approaches are context specific and may not be universally applicable to all neoliberal cases. Nonetheless, I contend that these approaches can be adapted to suit the particularities of each case.

Method

As the main focus of this study centres on the influence of discursive power on norms, habits, and practices within gay and lesbian spaces, qualitative methods

[86] Taylor, "Complexities and Complications: Intersections of Class and Sexuality," p.38.

have been selected as a primary mode of inquiry. For the most part, findings have been gathered through a mixed method approach comprising ethnography, in-depth interviews, and critical reading of primary and secondary texts. Collection of data from textual analysis range from scholarly books, journal articles, newspapers, biographies, magazine articles, survey findings, pamphlets and online media. Despite the abundance of data on societal perceptions of homosexuality in Chile, information on discriminatory practices within gay and lesbian spaces have largely been understudied. More significantly, understanding the links between capitalism and discriminatory rhetoric mandates a comprehensive investigation of gay and lesbian culture in Chile. A first-hand account of gay and lesbian life in Santiago, therefore, was integral in forming a more empirically sound and theoretically vibrant account of queer mobilization.

Ethnography or participant-observation is one of two key methods employed in this research. Between June and August 2014, I spent two months conducting fieldwork in Santiago de Chile. This practice-oriented approach entailed immersion within the LGBT community. My investigation included attending events at gay and lesbian bars, clubs, social organizations and protest marches. Ethnographic work tends to invoke a sensibility that transcends face-to-face contact. It is an approach that establishes an emotional engagement as a means to consolidate the meanings that structure the social and political reality of the people under study.[87] I observed and participated in activities such as social interactions, parties, protest marches, and organizational meetings. Based

[87] Edward Schatz, "Introduction: Ethnographic Immersion and the Study of Politics," in *Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Power*, ed. Edward Schatz (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), p.5.

on notes from the field, the differing roles observer and participant exposes the tensions of appropriating local knowledge as an outsider. As a 25-year-old male Indian from Singapore, my status as an outsider was clearly evident. A key issue arising from the outsider presence is the potential distortion of behavioural and ceremonial characteristics of subjects. A pressure to impress or fear of being judged could induce changes in a community's practices.[88] This, could, consequently adversely affect the quality of a study's findings. To mitigate this problem, I conducted 'fly on the wall' observations prior to active participation. Observations provided careful monitoring of interactions, behaviours, and actions which was followed by personal accounts of participation in these activities. For instance, to understand the climate of gay and lesbian life in Santiago, I spent several nights in clubs and bars studying the demographics, ambience, and scene of these various spaces. From afar, I would note minute details ranging from the music played to the class and ethnic profile of patrons to patterns of interactions between individuals. After a few hours, I would attempt to initiate a conversation with a few patrons or performers to understand their perspectives on the gay community. The establishments visited ranged from popular discos like Bunker Discotheque in Barrio Bellavista to smaller pubs like Bodeguita to private parties organized by LGBT-friendly networks like Lemon Lab. Likewise, visits to LGBT organizations were corroborated by 'fly on the wall' observations during meetings prior to interactions with participants and volunteers. Where possible, data collected from the field was

[88] This is especially so amongst sexual minorities. In many homophobic societies, sexual minorities might be conscious of their behaviour especially in the presence of outsiders such as heterosexual strangers and foreigners. Although Chile perceives itself as conservative with regards to homosexuality, a large portion of sexual minorities in gay and lesbian enclaves appear to be open about their sexual identities.

cross-referenced with other sources such as newspapers, journal articles, books, pamphlets and NGO findings for authentication.

In addition, I also relied on in-depth or semi-structured interviews. About 20 interviews were conducted with political officials, journalists, LGBT activists, and volunteers. Unlike formal interviews, in-depth interviews allowed for a more open-ended exchange. This involved preparing open-ended questions but also being granted the flexibility to ask clarifying or follow-up questions based on responses given by subjects. Doing so encouraged dialogue by allowing interviewees to set the pace and nature of the interview. Moreover, deviating from the script enhanced the overall level of trust between the interviewees and me by empowering them with the agency to speak about their experiences in their own words.[89] It also provided opportunities for subjects to disclose vital information uncaptured by existing scholarship. This was particularly imperative given the objective of highlighting tensions within the LGBT community. My contacts were obtained largely through snowball sampling, which entailed requesting for additional contacts at the end of interviews.[90]

Methodology: Epistemological Assumptions

Examining neoliberalism's influence on the socio-cultural aspects of the lives of sexual minorities requires interpreting and understanding the actions and practices of LGBT life. Thus, this study has adopted an interpretive approach.

[89] Mary Gallagher, "Capturing Meaning and Confronting Measurement," in *Interview Research in Political Science*, ed. Layna Mosley (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), p.193.
[90] With the exception of well-known activists and politicians, the identities of all other interviewees have been replaced with pseudonyms, as stated in the requirements of the Institutional Review Board at the National University of Singapore.

The objective of an interpretive framework is to understand human meanings driving individual actions and social practices.[91] This is based on an epistemological distinction between positivism and interpretivism. While the former presumes an objective reality that can be explained through 'scientific' causal processes, interpretive thought underlines that reality is socially constructed and therefore, the advancement of 'truth' claims are intersubjective and context-specific.[92] Studying social phenomena for interpretivists thus, involves "giving a description of the cultural context and state of mind of the agent in a way that makes his or her action intelligible to us".[93] This entails applying Clifford Geertz's anthropological method of 'thick descriptions' which outlines interpretation at two levels: first an interpretation of *common social meanings* in gay and lesbian culture (the significance of 'coming out'), and second an interpretation of *particular actions by individuals* (cruising and drag performances).[94]

Nevertheless, providing an account of gay and lesbian culture necessitates the specification of observable factors that can verify the existence of discriminatory discourses. To do this, I apply Lisa Wedeen's conceptualization of culture as 'semiotic processes'. Also known as a practice-oriented approach to culture, semiotic processes refers to "the processes of meaning-making in which agents' practices (e.g. their work habits, self-policing

[91] Daniel Little, *Varieties of Social Explanation: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Social Science* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1991), pp. 68-70.
[92] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1966).
[93] Little, *Varieties of Social Explanation: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Social Science*.
[94] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); Little, *Varieties of Social Explanation: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Social Science*, p.71.

strategies, and leisure patterns) interact with their language and other symbolic systems".[95] Deconstructing the semiotics of gay culture is also instrumental in uncovering the extent of heteronormative internalization within lesbian and gay discourse. This conceptualization operates on two levels. First, culture as semiotic practices refers to the function of heteronormative[96] language and symbols – "how they are inscribed in concrete actions and how they operate to produce observable political effects".[97] For instance, the pressure of *machista* culture on gay Chilean men to appropriate more masculine traits in their dressing and speech. Second, culture as semiotic practices operates as a lens. It provides a perspective on the conditions and wider structural factors influencing the performance of lesbian and gay identity.[98] For example, although sexual identities are physically indeterminable, the incursion of capitalism into gay and lesbian culture has made it possible of expressing one's sexuality through an embodied habitus.

Scope and Limitations

In spite of the generalizability of my claims across capitalist contexts, there are four key limitations of these findings that should be noted. First, unless otherwise stated, my findings mainly apply to queer life within the capital city of Santiago. As mentioned in chapter one, gay identity is most prevalent in modern capitalist cities due to the presence of safe enclaves for sexual

[95] Lisa Wedeen, "Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for Political Science," *American Political Science Review* 96, no. 4 (2002): p.713.
[96] Heteronormative power relations in this case does not merely refer to the gender dynamics pertaining to heterosexuality but also to other political hierarchies encompassing heteronormative institutions such as ethnicity, class, and ableism.
[97] Wedeen, "Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for Political Science," p.714.
[98] Ibid.

minorities. Rural areas are relatively more conservative in outlook. Furthermore, in a country where approximately 40 percent of its population resides in the capital city, it is vital to underscore that a bulk of gay-identity politics occurs in the region. Second, on the point of the 'mirroring effect', this study does not seek to offer a quantitative account of the extent of mirroring and the intensity of cleavages within the gay, lesbian, and transgender communities. It solely seeks to provide an ethnographic narrative on the existence of such cleavages and the social mechanisms that produces it. As such, it can be read as a preliminary investigation of the issue. Nevertheless, this study hopes to provide possibilities for future quantitative research.

Third, the key divisions within the lesbian and gay community that this study will focus on are class and gender. This is not to say that sexual minorities in Chile do not discriminate along other lines such as ethnicity. While ethnic discrimination does occur however, I contend that the issue is not as systemic compared to class and gender due to the likelihood of ethnic switching. Centuries of miscegenation during Spanish colonial rule has produced a culture of ethnic fluidity. Although 59% of Chileans identify as White, 30% Mestizo[99] and 6% as indigenous, most Chileans, except indigenous peoples, do not regard their ethnicity as a significant component of their identity.[100] Rather, as evidenced by the country's high income and gender inequality rates, the politicization of class and gender identities in society has permeated into the country's LGBT community.

[99] "Mestizo" refers to a mixed-race in the Americas created from centuries of miscegenation between white male Europeans and female indigenous populations.
[100] Latinobarometro, " Report 2011," (Corporacion Latinobarometro, 2012).

Lastly, it should be noted that heteronormative hegemony is not consistent across all capitalist societies. Heteronormative hegemony is more prevalent in lesbian and gay communities strongly influenced by free markets. Neoliberal societies like Chile, therefore, are more susceptible to divisions within their LGBT communities.[101] This is partly due to the dominance of large multi-national corporations and its corresponding control of consumer markets. With the dominance of consumer markets, this study will show that large firms are capable of institutionalizing a culture of commodity fetishism thereby inducing cleavages within the LGBT community.

[101] Nevertheless at this stage, comparing levels of heteronormative hegemony across contexts is beyond the scope of this research. As this investigation is primarily concerned with developing the theoretical foundations of this framework, future scholarship may consider undertaking comparative case studies.

Three

Profit, Pleasure, and Identity: Heteronormative Hegemony as Culture within Gay Spaces

For many cities around the world, the month of June is marked internationally as pride month. In honour of the Stonewall Riots on June 28, 1969, many LGBT activists around the world stage pride marches in commemoration of the birth of gay emancipation in New York's Stonewall Inn. Santiago de Chile is no exception. On 28 June 2014, I attended a pre-party at the Headquarters of Fundación Iguales - an organization working to ensure the full inclusion of sexual and gender non-conforming minorities in Chilean society. The party was attended by a young crowd, mainly volunteers of both genders in their twenties. Amidst the free-flowing mixers and sultry Latino music beating in the background, I found myself locked in an intriguing conversation with Julio, a twenty-year-old volunteer who recently joined Iguales. As a second year Social Work student from Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Julio had recently come to terms with his sexual identity as a young gay man. Prior to joining Iguales, he was living a 'straight life'; he had very little gay friends and was surrounded in a world of heteronormativity where he 'acted straight', had only

heterosexual friends, and pretended to like girls. Coming from a conservative middle-class family, he was fearful of the implications of coming out. But in an age where smartphones allows for social connections to be forged through applications like Grindr and Tinder[102], I was curious about his lack of gay friends outside Iguales. "It's hard making true friends within the gay community, it is largely driven by looks, status, and superficiality. That's why I don't believe in love", he replied jokingly. Antonio, another volunteer listening from a distance intervened: "Yeah, there's a lot of discrimination within the gay community. I think it's fucking ridiculous that discrimination exists within a group that is already experiencing discrimination from society. Don't be fooled by how friendly everyone in Iguales is because outside, there is a lot of discrimination against people who are darker skin, Mapuche[103], effeminate, and overweight. Iguales is an exception."

Antonio's depiction of Santiago's gay scene is emblematic of a wider issue rarely acknowledged by LGBT movements across the globe. While confronting institutionalized homophobia, activists often overlook systemic discrimination within the community. Despite the prevalence of social injustices such as racism, misogyny, and class-based discrimination, gay rights organizations are typically concerned with addressing societal homophobia. Policies such as anti-discrimination and same-sex marriage legislation are often erroneously framed as a universal panacea for the plight of a diverse range of sexual and gender minorities. Two explanations may account for this: one, as

[102] Grindr and Tinder are two of many online dating applications on smartphones used by gay men to find other men near them.
[103] The term 'Mapuche' refers to the largest indigenous population in Chile residing mainly in the southern region of Araucania.

LGBT organizations are typically dominated by the interests of middle-class gay men, it would be unsurprising that movements primarily focus on issues like same-sex marriage. Other issues like racism or poverty may not bear the same level of importance to these activists whom may be largely unaffected by it. A second could be the downplaying of social injustice as unintended acts of free will within the capitalist system. Neoliberal discourses are typically linked to norms of individualism and self-help. Subjects therefore, tend to be less conscious of the structural inequalities that perpetuate the privilege of dominant groups. Examining class privilege for instance, poor sexual minorities from conservative backgrounds may encounter difficulties establishing a network of social support within gay and lesbian enclaves due to the high expenses associated with accessing these sites. As a consequence, their struggles and identities are further marginalized as they are denied social and psychological networks of support. From a neoliberal paradigm, nonetheless, such acts of ostracization are justified from the perspective of businesses seeking to profit from LGBT sites. In other words, business interests possess the moral right to commoditize LGBT spaces according to the logics of self-help and free will. Additionally, ethnic minorities also encounter marginalization under capitalist guises. Mapuches or people with darker skin often face rejection from social circles under the pretext of 'personal preferences'. Nevertheless, such acts of 'free will' often conceals centuries of racist representations of indigenous and dark-skinned populations dating from the colonial era to contemporary times that still privileges a white, ethnocentric worldview. As such, certain institutions like the media still propagates a neo-colonial worldview of white supremacy, albeit subliminally through capitalist logics.

Both explanations possess some degree of merit. Nevertheless, this chapter attempts to focus on the latter account of the effects of neoliberal discourses on the marginalization of poor, ethnic and gender minorities within gay and lesbian spaces. In Chile, the inception of neoliberalism in the 1980s has engendered greater commodification within gay and lesbian enclaves. Thus, in this chapter, I seek to demonstrate that the proliferation of discriminatory discourses within LGBT spaces is a result of an increasing commodification of lesbian and gay identities brought about by neoliberalism. Specifically, I argue that capitalism renders sexual identities within LGBT spaces legible through the creation of the 'pleasure economy'. According to Foucault, the 'pleasure economy' is premised on how power regulates the body and desires of sexual subjects.[104] Thus in many neoliberal economies, the encroachment of capitalism into gay and lesbian spaces has given rise to a new ontological understanding of 'being gay'. From a previously unembodied characteristic, the pleasure economy enables the legibility of sexual identities through physical means such as types of clothing adorned, body labels, and norms of behaviour. More importantly, I assert that the kinds of discriminatory discourses that prevail are contingent on the prior socialization of subjects. Applying the theory of heteronormative hegemony, I will argue that in the process of participating in the pleasure economy, sexual minorities employ power relations derived from heteronormative worldviews as a means of forging social relations. In doing so, it erects boundaries segregating gays and lesbians from distinct ethnicities, income groups, and even identities. For the case of Chile, the primary focus of this chapter will be on gender and income stratification.

[104] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*.

Historical Overview of Gay Culture in Chile

In many ways, the development of gay culture in Chile parallels the trajectory assumed by numerous countries in the West. Prior to 1999, homosexuality was illegal under Article 365 of the Penal Code that criminalized sodomy.[105] The origins of Article 365 traces back to the era of Spanish colonialism in Chile. During this period, homosexuality was heavily stigmatized as *pecado nefando*, or 'nefarious sin', by the Catholic Church. In spite of the harsh repression faced by sexual minorities, archival documents reveal that sexual activities between men were not uncommon. According to a study of 123 men of different ethnicities[106] from Puebla and Mexico City, Serge Gruzinski notes "the existence of a subculture with its own secret geography, its own network of information and informants, [and] its own language and codes".[107] Gruzinski's findings bears critical implications for same-sex subcultures in colonial Spanish America. Chief of which was that despite the existence of urban networks of men who sought out other men for sexual relations, these men did not live in fear despite harsh repression and punishment by authorities. This discovery underscores society's tacit toleration of homosexuality insofar as such behaviour was confined to private realms.[108] The notion of a gay identity, therefore, was largely inexistent during the colonial era.

[105] "Modifica El Codigo Penal, El Codigo De Procedimiento Penal Y Otros Cuerpos Legales En Materias Relativas Al Delito De Violacion," (Santiago, Chile: Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile, 1999).
[106] The main ethnicities were *mestizos*, indigenous, Spanish, blacks, and Mulattos.
[107] Serge Gruzinski, "Las Cenizas De Deseo: Homosexuales Novohispanos a Mediados Del Siglo Xvii," in *De La Santidad a La Perversion O De Porque No Se Cumplia La Ley De Dios En La Sociedad Novohispana*, ed. Sergio Ortega (Mexico City: Editorial Grijalbo, 1986).
[108] Zeb Tortorici, "Against Nature: Sodomy and Homosexuality in Colonial Latin America," *History Compass* 10, no. 2 (2012).

Nonetheless, this does not imply that all sexual minorities were treated equally. Due to patriarchy and class stratification embedded within colonial institutions, gender and class hierarchies were common between men practising same-sex relations. This is evidenced by Geoffrey Spurling's analysis of prosecution of sodomy cases in Spanish South America. Spurling observed that more affluent suspects often exploited their wealth and social connections to escape punishment.[109] Another investigation of 500 sodomy cases from the Spanish tribunals of Valencia, Zaragoza, and Barcelona between the 1540s and 1750s reveals that 70.39% of men under 20 assumed the 'passive' role whereas only 12.02% of men over 20 years of age played the same role.[110] Based on this date Cristian Berco regards that, "the question of who was the inserter/dominator/man and who acted as the receptor/submissive/female gained vital relevance when conjoined with social, ethnic, and political status".[111] The roles of *activo* (penetrator/top) and *pasivo* (receptor/bottom), in fact, has historically been associated with traditional notions of masculinity and femininity. Within the context of post-colonial Latin America, the *machista* culture is constitutive of interconnecting class and gender relations. In New Spain, Spanish Conquistadors typically comprised of male middle-class landowners, merchants, military men, and elites. Upon establishing mines and plantations, *haciendas* (landed estates) were organized to shelter labourers that consisted mostly of poor indigenous peoples. The lack of female settlers

[109] Geoffrey Spurling, "Honor, Sexuality, and the Colonial Church: The Sins of Dr. Gonzalez, Cathedral Canon," in *The Faces of Honor: Sex, Shame, and Violence in Colonial Latin America*, ed. Lyman L. Johnson and Sonya Lipsett-Rivera (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998).
[110] Cristian Berco, *Sexual Hierarchies, Public Status: Men, Sodomy, and Society in Spain's Golden Age* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).
[111] Ibid.

consequently led many male Conquistadors into having sexual relations with the indigenous female population thereby procreating the *mestizo* or 'mix-blooded race'.[112] Over time, the performance of masculinity through the framework of class and ethnic subjugation eventually reified the cultural superiority of masculinity over femininity. Hence, the *activo* is typically regarded as superior due to its implicit connection to masculine dominance.

These class and gender hierarchies remained largely unchanged in the post-colonial era. Nonetheless, the moral authority of the Catholic Church alongside heteronormative legal provisions such as Article 365 rendered gay and lesbian identities invisible. The identities of cisgender homosexual men and women, for the most part, were illegible by either clothing or appearance. Nevertheless, *locas*[113] and *travestis* (transvestites) were unable to evade societal persecution. Due to their gender-variant identities, their non-compliance to heteronormativity was apparent through their bodies, speech, movement, and demeanour. As such, *locas* and transgenders were often victims of hate crimes and police violence. As a consequence of the stigma faced by *locas*, most had to resort to sex work to survive. Nonetheless, in 1970s Chile, there were traces of class segregation within *loca* sex workers. In an interview with Victor Hugo Robles in his book *Bandera Hueca*, one *loca* known only as *Raquel*, details the class segregation of *loca* sex workers as follows:

> At the time there were three groups of *maricas* (faggots) who congregated in the centre of Santiago. There were the ones who in the Plaza de Armas, the ones on Huérfanos Street, and the ones on the Alameda. The ones that met on

[112] Hellinger, *Comparative Politics of Latin America: Democracy at Last?*, pp. 82-85.
[113] *Loca* is the feminine form of the adjective 'crazy'. It mainly refers to gay identified men who toe the line between transvestitism and female identification. The *loca* possesses a pejorative connotation due to the femininity and mental instability imbued on its bodies. It is sometimes used as a catch-all term for all effeminate gay men.

> Huérfanos were the most beautiful *locas*, that ones that got themselves all done up, the *cuicas* (high-class women). The ones on the Alameda were just OK, like middle-class, and the ones in the Plaza de Armas, which were us, we were the poorest and the lowest.[114]

According to Pedro Lemebel, a celebrated Chilean writer, denies the notion of a homogenous 'gay community'. In the first chronicle of *Loco Afán* (Mad Desire), '*La noche de los visones*' ('The Night of The Minks'), Lemebel e(Lemebel, 1996)ncapsulates the tension between working and middle-class gay men respectively through the terms '*las rotas*' and '*las regias*'.[115] The *roto* is often described as belonging to an under-privileged working class, typically of indigenous descent and inhabiting the *poblaciones* (Santiago's shanty towns) located on the margins of the city. In contrast, the *pituco* (or *regio*) are part of a privileged middle-class with European descent[116] and links to the ruling elite.[117] Both groups, moreover, possess unique cultural and political allegiances. While the *roto* draws its sense of identity from the national heritage, the *pituco* looks abroad, in particular to North America and Europe, for its cultural ideals. In terms of political loyalties, the *rotos* were typically more sympathetic to Allende's Socialist government whereas the *pitucos* desired to see its overthrow by the military.[118] These differences notwithstanding, both groups were unified

[114] Victor Hugo Robles, *Bandera Hueca: Historia Del Movimiento Homosexual De Chile* (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Arcis, 2008).
[115] '*Las rotas*' and '*Las regias*' are two highly localised and colloquial terms in Chile alluding respectively to the working and middle classes. According to Kate Averis, '*las rotas*' "evokes the myth of an essentially Chilean sense of identity with its roots firmly drawing on a national heritage and an associated sense of patriotism despite connotations of poverty and criminality whilst *'las regias'* (or '*pitucas*') carries with it mocking connotations of snobbery, a slanted grasp of reality, and a limited sense of 'Chileanness'." See Averis, "Queering the Margin's: Pedro Lemebel's *Loco Afán*."
[116] This is manifested in their surnames with Basque, Italian, French, or British overtones although this may have diluted over several generations of miscegenation.
[117] Averis, "Queering the Margin's: Pedro Lemebel's *Loco Afán*."
[118] Pedro Lemebel, *Loco Afán: Crónicas De Sidario* (Santiago: Lom Ediciones, 1996).

against the wider effects of homophobic discrimination and the AIDS epidemic. This solidarity was tested during the Pinochet regime as sexual minorities and transgenders were frequently imprisoned and tortured by the *carabineros* (Military Police). The resultant violence inflicted by the dictatorship proliferated a culture of fear that gripped the LGBT community. Many gay establishments were either forced to close or driven underground. Consequently, parks across Santiago evolved into 'cruising grounds'[119] at night for gay men.[120] Gay parties, additionally, moved into private homes. Even so, these spaces were still unsafe from state persecution. The *carabineros* frequently employed article 373, which criminalizes "offenses to social morality", as a means of disbanding gay parties or cruising grounds.[121] At times, the article would be used arbitrarily to detain homosexuals when a more applicable reason could not be found.

Consequently, this led to the intensification of homophobia in Chile. Upon the restoration of democracy in 1990, the AIDS crisis affected a significant proportion of homosexual men. Exploiting this newfound democratic opening, a group of homosexual activists established MOVILH in 1991 under the broad agenda of 'gay emancipation'.[122] The celebration of the country's first LGBT rights organization[123] however, was short-lived as

[119] 'Cruising sites' are typically places where gay men congregate to search for sexual partners.
[120] Manuel Durán S., "Michel Foucault Y Su Política Queer De Los Placeres. Una Mirada a Las Geografías Del Deseo Homo Erótico En Chile," *Cyber Humanitatis* 35 (2005).
[121] Article 373 is typically employed against homosexuals when there is no direct evidence of sodomy being practiced. "Social morality" in the context of Chilean legislator can be interpreted as "public peace". Hence, just as someone can be arrested for committing violent actions in public, homosexuals can be arrested for being gay in public. Daniel Lyons, "The Construction of Gay Identity in Chile," *Culture, Society & Practice* 3, no. 1 (2004): p.33.
[122] Frasca, "Chile: Seizing Empowerment," p.259.
[123] Although MOVILH was the country's first LGBT rights organization, a lesbian rights group *Ayuquelen* (means "the joy of being" in the Mapudungun language) was its predecessor.

differences over internal practices and strategies emerged. Helmed mostly by middle-class gay men, the organization was accused of gay chauvinism and of adopting western strategies that had little relevance in the Chilean context. For instance, resources were expended mainly on campaigns to decriminalize anti-sodomy laws – a cause which many lesbians and transgender had little stake. The subsequent homonormalization of the movement led many lesbians, transgenders, and working-class gay men to distance themselves from the alliance.[124]

Concomitant with the political front, the institutionalization of neoliberalism heightened cultural dissension within the respective lesbian, gay, and transgender communities. Upon democratic consolidation, the influx of foreign investment stoked the emergence of a pink economy prompting the revival of gay bars, nightclubs, and bathhouses. Based on this context, the encroachment of neoliberalism into gay spaces has had multiple implications on the queer community. On a positive note, the creation of 'gaybourhoods' provided sexual minorities with a relatively safe area to express their sexualities. Furthermore, the proliferation of commercial establishments catering to the pink market empowered sexual minorities with a greater variety of choices that better reflects their needs. Nevertheless, there are darker sides to capitalism's incursion. One such effect is the gentrification of shophouses dislocating working-class and small businesses. Another impact involves the regulation of

Founded in 1984, the group was a lesbian-collective feminist movement. Unfortunately, the group was shortly after its tragic death of one of its leaders. Hugo Robles, *Bandera Hueca: Historia Del Movimiento Homosexual De Chile*.

[124] Hector Nuñez Gonzalez, "Political Practices and Alliance Strategies of the Chilean Glbtt Movement," in *The Politics of Sexuality in Latin America: A Reader on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights*, ed. Javier Corrales and Mario Pecheny (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), p.383.

LGBT bodies, habits, and desires through the pleasure economy. Although capitalism has empowered sexual minorities with greater consumer choice, it has also generated a monolithic gay culture marginalizing subjects that fail to conform to the standards of "being gay". As these cultural symbols, norms, and styles were imported by middle-class *regias* from the US and Europe, much of these reflects a hegemonic masculinity that alienates lesbians, transgenders, *locas*, and working class gay men.[125]

Heteronormative Hegemony: Systems of Representation

Although class and gender hierarchies predated the incursion of neoliberalism, I contend that the increasing commodification of gay identity has exacerbated discriminatory discourses amongst sexual minorities. The homogenization and masculinization of gay culture through the pleasure economy is largely the result of "global queering". Termed by Dennis Altman, "global queering" refers to the internationalization of American queer culture to non-western contexts.[126] The corresponding effect of "global queering" has rendered gay identity legible in Chile and precipitated a gay culture deeply embedded within capitalist modes of consumption. Consequently, to be acknowledged as a member of the gay scene entails appropriating particular practices, norms, and rituals that may adversely impacts one's sense of individuality. Moreover, the adoption of these norms and practices necessitates forms of privilege that may be exclusive to individuals from certain socio-economic backgrounds.

[125] Averis, "Queering the Margin's: Pedro Lemebel's *Loco Afán*."
[126] Altman, "Global Gaze/Global Gays," pp.96-98.

Aside from the materialism associated with being part of a commoditized gay culture, what would compel sexual minorities to engage in a culture that they would otherwise have no incentive to be part of? The answer in this case would lie in the prevalence of institutionalized homophobia. In addition to practices and lifestyles from the US, gay culture is constitutive of the element that sets it apart – heteronormativity. Thus, the inherent tropes within gay culture is formed in juxtaposition to the stereotypes applied by heterosexist society. It is in this vein where heteronormative hegemony as a power formation affects its subjects. In resisting the misogynistic and derogatory labels applied by heterosexist society, sexual minorities reify these gender and class hierarchies by employing the same language and logic that discriminates women and the poor. For instance, the term *maracon* (faggot) has been loosely applied to gay men, denigrating them as 'lesser men'. The term, furthermore, is predicated on the cultural inferiority of femininity and women. Rather than challenging these patriarchal structures, gay culture tends to uphold these power relations by appropriating masculinity in its symbols, norms, and performativity of homoerotic sexuality. This consequently leads to an extension of gender and class hierarchies amongst sexual minorities.

Correspondingly, the same pattern of heteronormative hegemony can be witnessed in the political sphere. In a study of the Chilean LGBT movement, Baird Campbell highlights the hegemonic masculinity inherent with the strategies of LGBT rights organizations such as MOVILH. Prior to 2011, criticisms over the marginalization of lesbians, transgenders, and poor sexual

minorities plagued the organization helmed mostly by middle-class gay men.[127] Nonetheless, as these cases have shown, the extension of heteronormative hegemony is symptomatic of the structural privileges that denies the visibility of these microaggressions. It is through the social conditioning of sexual minorities in which heteronormative hegemony gains stability. Analysing the key social forces conditioning the psyche of LGBT Chileans can help us better understand the reproduction of gender and class divisions within the community.

Global Influences

The advent of Chile's neoliberal regime has fostered an intimate development between its economy and local culture. Chilean culture has always been described as distinct from the rest of its neighbours. Due to its geographic position and past relations with its neighbours, the country has often been characterized as an "island on its own". Separated from Argentina by the Andean Mountains to the east, Peru and Bolivia by the Atacama Desert to the north, and surrounded by the Pacific and Southern Ocean to its west and south respectively, access to the capital prior to the arrival of aeroplanes and modern engineering was typically fraught with difficulties. Moreover, a long history of economic tensions with Argentina and political animosity with its neighbours to the north[128], Peru and Bolivia, has segregated Chile from the rest of the region. Due to this political and geographic isolation, Chilean social practices have evolved in a comparatively unique fashion. This is evidenced by the

[127] Baird Campbell, "*Movilh*-Ization: Hegemonic Masculinity in the Queer Social Movement Industry in Santiago De Chile" (Tulane University, 2014), p.25.
[128] Much of which can be traced back to the War of the Pacific in 1879.

peculiarity of the Chilean dialect of Spanish from other dialects across the Spanish speaking world.[129] Nevertheless, the geographical and socio-political segregation from other Latin American states has also inhibited Chile's exposure to alternative sexual identities and cultures. As one of the few countries that have yet to legalize abortion and same-sex marriages, Chileans often regard themselves as 'conservative' when compared to other Latin American societies such as Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and Mexico. A closer examination of the widening schism amongst sexual minorities, however, yields a more nuanced narrative on the role of global influences.

Although class and gender distinctions have been extant since colonial rule, the institutionalization of neoliberalism has exacerbated these divisions. This is evidenced by the cultural inequalities between middle-class (*regias*) and poor (*rotas*) sexual minorities. Prior to democratization, as the *regias* looked northward to the US, the *rotas* derived their cultural roots from a more authentic Chilean national identity. This, however, does not imply that the *rotas* were impartial to Western influences any more than their hostility toward the *regias* might suggest. In fact, the *rotas* revered western figures, symbols, and personalities as much as the *regias*. Despite the antagonisms, the *rotas* held varying degrees of admiration for the elegance and aesthetic of the *regias* that to them, were financially and culturally unattainable. In a description of the presence of *regias* in the poor neighbourhood of Recoleta, Lemebel writes:

[129] As Sara Balder points out, "Chilean Spanish is especially unique and phonetically and lexically, and there are many *dichos* or *Chilenismos*, which are sayings, jokes, and colloquialisms that would not be readily understood by non-Chilean Spanish speakers". See Sara Rose Balder, "Language, Heterosexism, and Identity: Normative Chilean Discursive Practices" (Masters, University of Colorado, 2005), p.14.

> They turned up in Recoleta in their mink coats, just like Liz Taylor, or Marlene Dietrich, on the bus. Just imagine. The whole neighbourhood turned out to see them, as sophisticated as film stars, like models from *Paula* magazine.[130]

In the eyes of the spectators and sexual minorities in the neighbourhood, the presence of the *regias* confers a spectre of glamour and worldliness that symbolizes power in the form of prestige. This prestige is as much a legacy of colonialism and global capitalism that privileges Eurocentric bodies, cultural values, and worldviews. Hollywood films, music, and global brands possess a large influence in shaping the interests and tastes of consumers the world over. In the case of sexual minorities in Chile, the return of foreign investments and businesses have led to the emergence of a pleasure economy that regulates bodies and desires of consumers. As a large part of the pleasure economy relies on the commoditization and discursive regulation of sexuality, this tacitly makes LGBT identities intelligible.

In many urban centres, a core proponent of the pleasure economy has been the growing international demand for LGBT tourism. From Florida's Key West to Bangkok, gay tourist destinations feature attractions that are structured around the experience of being marginalized in a heteronormative society. Openly displaying homoerotic behaviour without the fear of persecution and the experience of inclusion are some of the key desires of sexual minorities. As such, tourist agencies typically market events that resonate with these experiences.[131] Travel web sites and agencies like 'Gay Spartacus' and the

[130] Lemebel, *Loco Afán: Crónicas De Sidario*.
[131] Michael Stuber, "Tourism Marketing Aimed at Gay Men and Lesbians: A Business Perspective," in *Gay Tourism: Culture, Identity, and Sex*, ed. Stephen Clift, Michael Luongo, and Carry Callister (London: Continuum, 2002), pp. 89-90.

International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association often feature key events like Pride festivals, homoerotic parties, and Mens-Only resorts.[132] Although these events were mainly conceived in the cosmopolitan urban settings of Euro-American countries, media connections and transnational activism has advanced the appeal of pink tourism to non-western contexts.

In Chile, gay tourism arose out of the solidarity against the HIV/AIDS epidemic of the 1980s. Initially, these businesses were established to provide goods and services without prejudice to gay men and women. But with economic growth averaging at a rate of 7 percent per year under civilian rule, this produced a growing middle-class demand for more recreational activities.[133] In a span of 25 years, gay bars, clubs, and bathhouses emerged to meet this demand. A majority of these establishments are congregated in the upper-class neighbourhood of Barrio Bellavista. With the surge of gay recreational spaces, tour agencies began to position these places as 'gay tourist attractions'. One such company is 'Gay Datos' that markets itself as a 'tour guide for LGBT tourism" in Latin America'. Set up by a group of gay businessmen, the firm consolidates information on LGBT-friendly landmarks and services across cities in South America. This includes businesses such as bars, clubs, bathhouses, and events such as pride marches.

Nevertheless, the majority of these attractions targets the gay male market. In a typical gay tourism pamphlet as shown in figure 3.1, most of the images display homoerotic scenes of topless men. A bulk of the advertisements

[132] Howard L. Hughes, *Pink Tourism: Holidays of Gay Men and Lesbians* (Oxfordshire: CABI, 2006), pp.46-48.
[133] Lois Hecht Oppenheim, *Politics in Chile: Democracy, Authoritarianism, and the Search for Development*, Second ed. (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1999), pp.154-55.

ranging from gay discotheques to men's-only bathhouses suggests that gay men comprise the major base of consumers within the gay tourism industry. This is not unique to Chile. According to a global report on LGBT Tourism conducted by the World Tourism Organization in 2012, the lack of lesbian visibility in the gay tourism market can be credited to stereotypes of lesbians as low-budget, frugal travellers.[134] Hence, they are often dismissed as a lower spending group when compared to the more lucrative gay male segment. However, the report

Figure 3.1 Pamphlet of Gay Tourist Attractions in Santiago de Chile

also alludes to the problems of such notions by citing studies that have shown lesbians to be as affluent and spendthrift as gay men.[135] In fact, the prevalence of erotic male imagery in such advertisements is mostly a consequence of an

[134] "Global Report on Lgbt Tourism," (Madrid, Spain: World Tourism Organization, 2012).
[135] Ibid.

androcentric worldview buttressed by Euro-American capitalist influence. But in spite of this reality, the ubiquity of male erotica within gay spaces affects the culture of consumerism in addition to the perceptions and behaviours of gays, lesbians, and transgenders.

Consumer Culture: The 'gay lifestyle'

In one study of gay identity in Chile, Daniel Lyons underscores the importance of neoliberalism in the advancement of gay visibility. According to Lyons, a key benefit of Pinochet's free-market reforms has been the influx of North American commodities and values. This, as a consequence, has engendered a more consumerist and materialistic gay identity in Chile. Conducting ethnography in Santiago in 2003, Lyons describes the atmosphere of Bellavista:

> As Hector Nunez and I strolled through *el Barrio Gay* (gay neighbourhood) in the Bellavista district of Santiago, he pointed out to me the distinction between bars, restaurants, and apartments that were *gay* and those which were just gay. With reference to the places that he considered *gay*, Hector would flip his wrist and exaggerate his stride and when speaking of places that were simply gay, he would speak and move in his natural manner. When the doors were open, we would stop in to those that Hector considered gay, often relaxed and dim, without much production, however our stroll turned into a rapid sashay as we glared past the places that he told me were "*gay*", usually flashy bright coloured discos.[136]

Hector's contempt for the proliferation of gay consumerist fashion and identity in Chile stems from the observation that such images and stereotypes are as much a product of heterosexism and homophobic culture as it is a product of gay consumerism. Despite increasing visibility, the importation of consumerist culture has paradoxically added credibility to the myth of a 'gay lifestyle'. The

[136] Lyons, "The Construction of Gay Identity in Chile," p.26.

latter is a heterosexist belief concerning the habits and practices of gay men that includes being fashionably adept, frequently patronizing discotheques, obsession with one's body image, and being sexually promiscuous. Although clearly a stereotype, it has been frequently employed by conservatives as an injunction against the advancement of LGBT rights. Moreover, it serves as a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' wherein gay men internalize the logics of a 'gay lifestyle' as a means of expressing their sexuality and gaining acceptance into the community.

Notwithstanding the superficiality surrounding the perception and substance of the 'gay lifestyle', its existence as a cultural knowledge is indicative of the workings of commodity fetishism. Hennessy proclaims that commodity fetishism renders the material base of value invisible by "attaching itself to the products of labour as soon as they are produced".[137] In other words, commodity fetishism is a way of seeing whereby consumers are induced to solely value commodities as a final product that de-links it from the conditions that make it possible. Within the context of gay spaces in Chile, this alienating effect habituates subjects to view bodies as commoditized objects. Social relations, which includes interactions and norms, are structured such that body images that conforms to idealized notions of beauty and masculinity are rigidly adhered to. Indeed, the process of commoditizing bodies is well evident in the practice of 'cruising'. During the dictatorship, cruising, a practice whereby men sought for sex with other men, typically occurred in parks due to the forced closures of many gay establishments. In contemporary times, however, the practice of cruising has been commercialised with the emergence of bathhouses

[137] Hennessy, *Profit and Pleasure: Sexual Identities in Late Capitalism*, p.95.

and social networking applications like Grindr. Even discotheques and bars have been reconstituted as sites of cruising, albeit in more subtle terms. Christopher, a twenty-three year old gay male who frequently patronizes gay clubs explains:

> Cruising is all about the gaze. It's about using your body to entice others around you, to notice and be noticed. But clubs and bars are distinct from bathhouses in that the former spaces require a performative element. Unlike bathhouses where men typically cruise topless or in the nude, bars and clubs have a minimum dress code. Because of that, we embody our sexuality in the way we dress and interact. The ones that get the most attention are the more 'masculine men' – meaning the muscular guys with tight-fitting shirts and facial hair. There is a lot of discrimination against effeminate men, mainly due to the *machista* culture.[138]

Christopher's interpretation of cruising manifests a culture of sexualizing masculinity. Despite the freedom to expressing one's sexuality, recognition of one's sexual identity is contingent on conforming to specific ideals in these spaces. As such, gay men who do not share these attributes are typically ostracized with their sexualities denied. Moreover, the commodification of gay culture has further exacerbated class divisions within the gay community. The frequent patronage of bars and clubs, for instance, are beyond the financial reach of many working-class Chileans. (Lyons, 2004)[139] Hence, gay men from poorer backgrounds find it difficult to attain the same identity that is purchased by those of a privileged class.

The predilection toward masculine identities and commodity fetishism within gay spaces is the symptom of perception. In a sense, perception is a conduit for cultural knowledge which, in turn, is embedded in the social

[138] Christopher, interview by Shyam Anand Singh, 14th June 2014, 2014.
[139] Lyons, "The Construction of Gay Identity in Chile," pp. 35-36.

relationships of labour and power. Although existing societal hierarchies have historically been the product of colonialism, the representational power of capitalist institutions in the present era have legitimized these existing social relations. Buttressed by a vast array of technological innovations in mass media, including the advertising industry, these institutions are integral to the conditioning of new desires or offering the promise of pleasure in the form of commodity consumption.[140] Nonetheless, the forms of pleasure propagated by these institutions are inseparable from the heteronormative logics of gender and desire. In other words, the terms for queer desire are defined by the heteronormative paradigm. This is demonstrated by the ubiquitous employment of masculine images in consumer advertisements. Almost every gay focused establishment in Bella Vista features white, topless men with a well-toned physique as part of their marketing campaign. Fausto, a popular gay discotheque, frequently utilises such techniques. As evidenced in figure 3.2, the

[140] Hennessy, *Profit and Pleasure: Sexual Identities in Late Capitalism*, p.95.

Figure 3.2 Advertisements of events organized by Fausto Discotheque[141]

image of white men with blue eyes and a well-toned body translates to an appeal towards an upper-class demographic. Martina, a 28-year old female from the middle-class neighbourhood of Providencia explains:

> Santiago is not really a city by itself. It is more like a country with many cities. It is very segregated along class lines and people rarely travel beyond their *barrios* except for work. You can notice this from the colour of people's skin and the way they dress and speak. The western areas of Maipo are the poorer parts of Santiago where people tend to be shorter and have darker skin. But as you move towards the East towards *barrios* like Vitacura and Las Condes, you will notice people becoming taller, whiter, and richer.[142]

Martina's testimony points to a socio-economic schism in Santiago that is well acknowledged and exploited by gay recreational establishments. Although appealing to a middle-class demographic is within the 'free will' of business owners, it has an effect of marginalizing working-class groups. Moreover, it capitalizes on media representations of white, masculine supremacy that proliferates a culture of nonchalance and denigration towards working-class,

[141] Fausto, "Eventos Del Fausto," http://www.fausto.cl/#!eventos/c7hs.
[142] Martina, interview by Shyam Anand Singh, 12th July 2014, 2014.

indigenous, and feminine identities. This, as a consequence, creates a norm of apathy that sustains discriminatory discourses and practices.

Structural Privilege

Neoliberalism plays a critical role in the stabilization of heteronormative hegemony. In creating ideological structures that privilege elitist and patriarchal worldviews, neoliberal institutions operate to proselytize marginalized groups to the hegemonic norm. These norms typically conform to a heteronormative worldview which underscores societal cleavages along class, gender, and ethnicity. Neoliberal forces therefore, wield a significant influence in the way sexual minorities prioritize and structure their worldviews. Aside from consumerism, these forces are deeply embedded in institutions wielding a considerable clout in the socialization of Chileans. Not only do such institutions reinforce a heteronormative *Weltanschauung*, but it fosters a culture of self-interest and political apathy that precludes an open discourse of minority issues.

The origins of this system can be traced back to the era of military rule. Prior to the 1973 coup, Chilean democracy was characterised by its dynamic political life, which manifested in dense networks of civic activism. Principles such as social justice was a deeply held virtue by many sectors of society, particularly the Catholic Church and the working class unions. Eventually, the corresponding political and economic crises that ensued led the military to reassess the nature of state-society relations. Military technocrats, principally schooled in the neoliberal paradigm at the University of Chicago (also known as the Chicago Boys), implemented policies that significantly reduced the role of state intervention and replaced it with the invisible hand of the market.

Gradually, the Chicago Boys believed that the neoliberal approach could affect not only people's behaviour but also their basic values. Acting on this premise, the regime applied the free market ideal to other aspects of social life in a plan called the 'Seven Modernizations'. The ultimate objective was to disband the notion of class interests or the concept of cohesive social classes in favour of a politically atomized society of self-interested, rationally calculating individuals.[143] Numerous social sectors were affected including the media, education, unions, and social services.

Although privatization reforms largely favoured middle-class businesses, conservative values predominated in society due to the intricate relationship forged between the Catholic Church and big businesses. A key example would be *Canal 13* (Channel 13), a major television network with close ties to the Catholic Church. Besides a growing regional and international presence, the network controls five television channels, four radio stations, and a considerable online presence. Established by the *Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile* (Pontifical Catholic University of Chile) in 1959, the network was fully owned by the university until its transfer to the Luksic Group in 2010.[144] Based on a 2012 ranking that indicates *Canal 13* as the most watched network on television, the network arguably possesses significant influence on the psyche of Chileans.[145]

[143] Oppenheim, *Politics in Chile: Democracy, Authoritarianism, and the Search for Development*, p.147.
[144] "Memoria Anual," Canal 13, http://www.13.cl/inversionistas/sites/default/files/memoria/archivos/MEMORIA%202013%20PLIEGO.pdf.
[145] E13 Espectaculos, "Canal 13 Lidera El Ranking De Lo Más Visto En La Tv," (January 19, 2012).

As the Catholic University of Chile is closely linked to the Church, most of the content generated by the network upholds conservative values including traditional gender roles. Such norms serves to reinforce the legitimacy of gender socialization and class consciousness perpetuated by existing Chilean households. For instance, children are taught since young that gender and sexual roles for men and women are significantly different. Boys are encouraged to be tough, masculine, and dominant, and are known to be admonished or stigmatized for doing otherwise. Many gay interviewees mentioned that it was common for boys to be mocked by older men (as well as bullied by their peers) for displaying effeminate behaviour. The common reproach in most instances was, "*no seas maricón*" ("don't be a faggot"). Girls, conversely, are expected to fulfil society's standards of femininity which includes seeing their role as subservient and demure. In terms of sexuality, while men are encouraged to be active and aggressive, women are conditioned to retain their sexual innocence. Until recently, female promiscuity has been strongly stigmatized in society. This is supported by the fact that abortion is still criminalized, largely due to the influence of the Church amongst right-wing politicians. These instances prove the predominance of cultural patriarchy, the outcome of which is that, regardless of age, Chileans are cognizant of the power differentials and predefined roles based on gender identity.

Media networks like *Canal 13* play an integral role, albeit subliminally, in the validation of these norms. With a litany of content ranging from news shows to reality television to *telenovelas,* these programmes serve to reinforce gender and class profiling. Intriguingly, although numerous programmes glorify the materialism of the affluent, such ostentatious displays do not inevitably

translate to increased class hostilities. Instead, such programmes function to inculcate neoliberal values of self-interest and the material pursuit of the 'good life'. One such programme is the popular *telenovela* entitled *Machos*. Alongside Lyons's study, several interviewees I spoke to alluded to the series as an accurate depiction of the degree of patriarchal hegemony in Chilean society. *Machos* is a daily television series that has been active since 2003. The story

Figure 3.3 Promotional advertisement of *Machos* (left) and a 1960s *Canal 13* advertisement affirming its conservative leanings in its slogan (translated), "For the Motherland, God, and the University" (right).

takes place in the coastal city of Viña del Mar and details the interconnecting trials and tribulations of a wealthy patriarch and his seven sons. The popularity of the series can be attributed to two main factors. Firstly, in spite of its conservative portrayals, the show addresses several controversial issues including sexism, infidelity, and homosexuality. Secondly, the context of the programme draws its appeal from the post-colonial imaginary of the Chilean nation as a fundamentally European society. Standard census populations do little to disclose the range of ethnic diversity. According to the state census,

about 88.9% of the population identifies as either White or *Mestizo*.[146] Nevertheless, despite a vast majority of Chileans being of mixed ancestry, it is very common for many people to extol their European identity while neglecting their indigenous roots. The programme, therefore, employs a Eurocentric appeal as a means of connecting to the market. As figure 3.3 shows, the main characters are all male and mostly white, which has been historically synonymous with the aristocracy in post-colonial Chile. It is with class privilege and its underlying allusions to worldliness that accords the series with adequate attention to address issues such as homosexuality. In spite of its privilege, the series inadvertently enforces several tropes in relation to class and sexuality. For instance, Alex (first from right in fig.3.3) is portrayed as the most sexually confident character, which is embodied by his masculine demeanour, while Ariel, his gay brother, is portrayed as a neurotic and outcast. The profiling of these characters, as the openly gay writer of the series Pablo Llanes elucidates, is a result of market representations of sexual minorities:

> Within the upper classes, it's considered 'in' to support gays or lesbians and this bothers me very much. These people claim to accept the gay world yet they discriminate in ways that are so hypocritical, buying a gay friend like a decorative object or a new scarf purchased from *Alonzo de Cordova* (a popular gay fashion store).[147]

The characterization of gay characters on popular media, therefore, has a profound effect on the self-perception of sexual minorities. Such

[146] "South America: Chile," Central Intelligence Agency: The World Factbook, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ci.html.
[147] Paula Coddou B., "La Vida Fuera Del Closet," *El Sabado*, 18th July 2003.

characterizations imply that individuals eligible for acceptance are those who are able to perform masculinity and are able to afford the 'gay lifestyle'.

Heteronormative Hegemony: Iterative Practices within Gay Spaces

Representations of class and gender identities have a profound effect on the self-perception and behaviour of sexual minorities. Page and Peacock affirm that the development of homosexual identities is acutely contingent on an individual's prior heteronormative socialization.[148] The subsequent internalization of heteronormative logics eventuates in the signification of these identities within gay spaces. Investigating the conditions for the performance of these identities and its multiple reasons, albeit its importance, is beyond the scope of this study. Instead, my focus on iterative practices arises from Butler's eloquent observation: "there need not be a 'doer behind the deed', but that the 'doer' is variably constructed in and through the deed".[149] This understanding invokes Foucault's conceptualization of modern power as generative, wherein social categories have the capacity to produce particular kinds of subjects.[150] Hence, this section highlights the proliferation of categorical identities and practices within gay spaces as a result of neoliberalism. These newfound identities, I contend, have formed the basis for increased discrimination within gay spaces.

[148] Page and Peacock, "Negotiating Identities in a Heteronormative Context," pp. 641-42.
[149] Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, p.195.
[150] Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, ed. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

Socio-economic Marginalization

The commodification of gay identity has been a double-edged sword for sexual minorities. On one hand, the emergence of LGBT-centred establishments have provided a safe space for the sexual expression of LGBTs. Jobs created in these commercial spaces also afford safe employment opportunities to sexual minorities marginalized by heterosexist society. Conversely, the commercialization of gay spaces have engendered norms of segregation and exclusion amongst gays and lesbians. In a study of the homonormative socialization of gay spaces in Santiago, Pablo Astudillo Lizama interviewed Vicente, a 26-year-old organizer of travelling parties:

> "Appearance and image matters most in any party. As an organizer, I want people with certain characteristics. When *Flaites*[151] enters into high-end clubs like Soda or Illuminati… I don't know, they can hardly identify with anybody there. I can identify from their profile when they enter my party and I say *pucha*[152] because I do not want them to come."[153]

Vicente's testimony points to the importance of appearance and manner as a determinant of socio-economic status. A consequence of increasing commodification has been a greater intelligibility of gay identity, which manifests in a pattern of conformity and profiling of gay, lesbian, and transgender bodies. Besides the financial unattainability of these identities to the poor, a culture of increased profiling has deepened segregation between gays

[151] *Flaite(a)* is a slang in Chilean Spanish that colloquially refers to a poor, dangerous delinquent, typically dressed in baggy pants. Although a subjective category, it is used as a pejorative connotation to describe the lower class as aggressive and unrefined.
[152] *Pucha* is a derogatory term which translates to vagina or pussy.
[153] Pablo Astudillo Lizama, "Criterios De Diferenciación Social Dentro Del Espacio De Sociabilidad Gay En Santiago De Chile," in *V Coloquio de Estudios de Varones y Masculinidades* (Santiago de Chile2015), p.7.

and lesbians in commercial spaces. For instance, those who dress and behave in more refined and sophisticated ways are labelled as *cuicos*[154] while individuals identified as flaites are known to wear flashy costumes as a means of compensating for their perceived social inferiority. Generally from middle-class neighbourhoods like Las Condes and Vitacura, the identity of *cuicos* is largely shaped by Euro-American influences. This is evidenced by the increasing presence of global retail outlets like H&M and Fitness First in wealthier areas. Concomitant with media portrayals of desirable male bodies as masculine, athletic, and fashionably savvy, these representations have further pervaded into gay subcultures. As a consequence, corporations such as H&M, Abercrombie & Fitch, and Fitness First has benefitted from the gay market as a growing number of middle-class gay men adorn tight-fitting shirts and patronize gym memberships as a symbol of power and status. Pablo, a 28-year-old Pharmacist, who observed this trend, remarked:

> I think these corporations know what we [gay men] want. It's like they know what makes us comfortable and then market it to us. You know… like the topless models from A&F and their marketing campaigns in parties and discos. But yeah… the wealthier ones might be hotter but also really superficial and arrogant.[155]

Flaites, on the other hand, refers to androgynous gay men from less privileged backgrounds. At times, they often appropriate the role of a *transformista* – a term to describe cisgender gay men practising cross-dressing. In commercial spaces, *transformistas* are typically employed by discotheques

[154] *Cuico(a)* is a slang in Chilean Spanish that colloquially refers to the wealthier class. It is also a subjective category and its application depends on a person's position in the social hierarchy.
[155] Pablo, interview by Shyam Anand Singh, 25th July 2014, 2014.

and bars as performers. For instance, in well-established clubs like Fausto and Bunker, it is not uncommon to find *transformistas* as dance performers and hosting shows. Despite their popularity, the capitalist machinery accords their androgynous attributes through a process of 'othering', reducing their bodies as sites to be gawked at rather than as social individuals. This voyeuristic practice has demonstrated the accentuation of socio-economic cleavages within gay spaces.

Gender(ed) Discrimination

The traditional notion of gender as a heterosexist dichotomy is an institutionalized norm that is deeply entrenched in Chilean society. Bolstered by media representations and the Catholic Church, rigid gender norms that celebrate the dominance of masculinity over femininity has also permeated gay and lesbian subcultures. Characterizations of public space as masculine and private realms as feminine is validated by the uneven portion of commercial establishments catering to gay men as opposed to lesbians. Nevertheless, gender inequality is not solely confined to power relations between men and women, but also affects the expressive agency of both sexes. In other words, men who appropriate effeminate attributes and women displaying masculine behaviour also experience discrimination to varying degrees. As most sexual minorities are socialized in heteronormative settings, the cultural prescriptions of masculine supremacy are extended into the gay and lesbian subcultures.

In Chile's case, hegemonic masculinity is more apparent within the gay sub-culture. Consider a 1997 study by the *Corporación Chilena de Prevención del SIDA* (Chilean Corporation of the Prevention of HIV) that asserts that the

act of being penetrated is a source of stigma for many Chilean MSM[156] as it represents assuming an effeminate position in sexual intercourse. The study notes that many participants verbally identify as *activo* (penetrator) despite their practice of being *pasivo* (penetrated) in an effort to conform to an 'acceptable' male homosexuality. As indicated in the testimonies of two men:

> … and I told them, daddy, mommy, I'm a homosexual. And my dad asked me: 'Are you *activo* or *pasivo*? And I answered him '*activo*'. And he replied, 'Oh ok, that's alright.'

> … it's like, the roles are super defined and everybody always tends to say, 'no, I'm *activo*' and then you just start to realize that it's not true. But the role were always demarcated like that.[157]

The dominance of masculinity, in fact, is manifested by a 'cult of worship' towards specific men who embody such qualities. As Nicolas, a 25 year old undergraduate mentions:

> "In the gay scene, there are usually a couple of guys who are very popular because they are like rich, cute guys with really hot bodies. Everywhere they go they have a huge following but they only tend to mix with other rich, hot guys. It's like an exclusive club where they sleep around, party together, and even do some [recreational] drugs. And only good-looking, white, rich guys are able to join that circle."[158]

Nicolas' excerpt indicates that norms of acceptance within gay culture in Chile is currently contingent on conforming towards masculine body images. According to Lemebel, these idealized representations are largely a result of

[156] MSM refers to men who have sex with men.
[157] "De Amores Y Sombras: Poblaciones Y Culturas Homo Y Bisexuales En Hombres De Santiago," (Santiago de Chile: La Corporación Chilena de Prevención del SIDA, 1997).
[158] Nicolas, interview by Shyam Anand Singh, 14th June 2014, 2014.

middle-class importation of Euro-American lifestyles and norms.[159] As a reaction to these athletic body images, a litany of body labels have emerged in an effort of sexualizing non-idealized bodies within gay spaces.

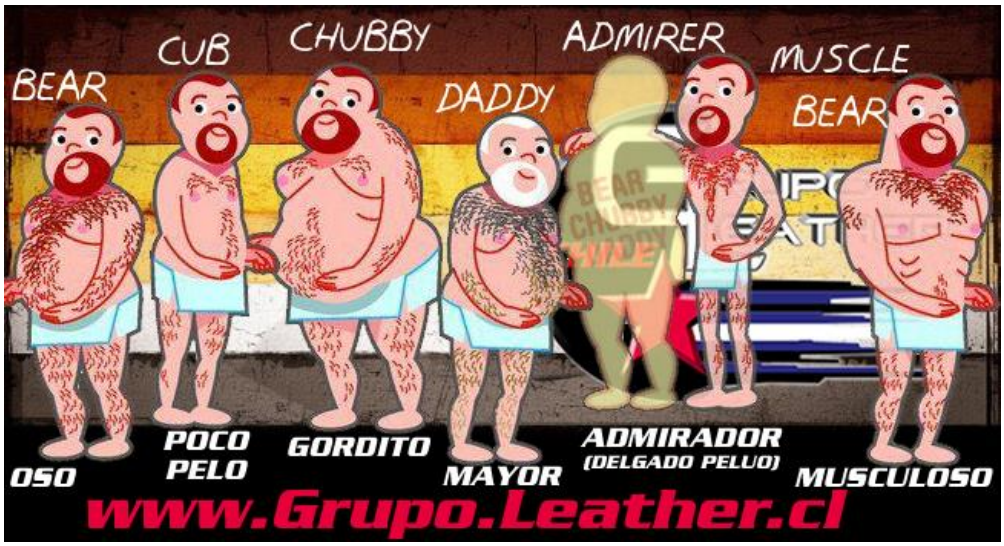

Figure 3.4 Advertisement classifying "body types" amongst gay men.[160]

One such example is the emergence of *Club de Osos* (Bears Club) in Santiago in 1998. In gay parlance, 'bears' generically refers to big and hairy men. The concept of 'bears' first originated sometime in the early 1990s in San Francisco, when homosexual men were prejudiced for their perceived effeminacy. As such, the 'bear' label was conceived as a strategy of appropriating the image of a "strong, rustic, 'manly-man'", as a means of subverting the effeminate stereotype.[161] In Chile, the Bears Club meets regularly for multiple activities including parties, discussions, and barbeques. One critical habit shared by bears is having a rich diet. An average meal would include

[159] Lemebel, *Loco Afán: Crónicas De Sidario*.
[160] "Clasificación Bear," http://www.grupo.leather.cl/index.php/79-fiestas/101-caverna.
[161] Andrea Lagos, "Club De Osos De Chile," *Revista Paula*2005.

approximately half a kilo of meat per person alongside alcohol and desserts. Maintaining a large physique is integral to the identity and sexual desirability of bears. Juan Pablo, the club's treasurer remarks:

> I've never seen a bear on diet. We are assumed to be gay and fat. Besides, we eat tirelessly because of the richness of the food. A bear that is a poor eater is not a bear.[162]

Furthermore, the club maintains stringent rules on the body image of new members. Mario, President of the Club explains:

> All applicants have to go through a selection process. After the first round, you will be assigned to a 'bear godfather' to assist with conducting group activities (dinner, meeting, coffee, walk, or film). You will then be evaluated on your character by popular vote to see if it fits with the profile of 'gay-male, hairy, and plus-sized'.[163]

Occasionally, the club opens its doors to non-members during its leather parties.[164] But even so, admittance into the party is contingent on having the appropriate 'bear' body. As the advertisement on figure 3.4 illustrates, only men with the relevant types of bodies displayed would gain access to the parties. The purpose of this regulation, as the website indicates, is to "ensure that the environment is 100 percent suited to everyone's taste".[165]

Accordingly, the evolution of the bear and various gay subcultures has three main implications for gay identity in Chile. First, its development is predicated on the codification of bodies and sexual desires. Although capitalism provides increased choices to sexual minorities, it enables capitalists to

[162] Ibid.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Leather parties are social events for MSM and gay men with a fetish for dressing in leather.
[165] "Clasificación Bear".

influence consumer choices through the creation of body labels therein fostering discriminatory discourses. LGBs who do not conform to these labels are marginalized. Second, these discriminatory discourses operate along pre-existing societal cleavages such as class and gender. The Bear Club's stringent emphasis on maintaining a masculine physique and demeanour, for instance, reflects the permeation of *machismo* into gay culture. Even amongst lesbians, class antagonisms prevail. Cristina, a 23 year old undergraduate who identifies as lesbian from an upper-middle class background details her experience of discrimination:

> I have come to be very conscious about disclosing my [class] status at certain [lesbian] bars. One time I revealed the university I was attending to this woman and she condescendingly responded "Oh… aren't you a daddy's little girl" and then walked away…[166]

Hence, despite poor lesbian visibility in Santiago's commercial gay scene, discrimination along socio-economic lines exist. The third lesson deals with the overall function of inclusivity and its implications for collective action. As neoliberalism engenders an internalization of the logics and practice of discriminatory discourses within the respective lesbian and gay communities, it subsequently propagates a culture of exclusion and distrust. This consequently affects the mobilizational capacities of LGBT organizations.

In sum, this chapter has detailed neoliberalism's influence in the propagation of discriminatory discourses within gay communities through heteronormative hegemony. In the next chapter, I will elucidate the strategies employed by LGBT organizations in resisting discriminatory discourses. While

[166] Cristina, interview by Shyam Anand Singh, 28th June 2014, 2014.

the first twenty years of democratic rule was characterised by antagonistic politics between MOVILH and other LGBT organizations, the emergence of Iguales in 2011 has strengthen the movement's internal legitimacy through the frame of *diversidad*. It is the interpretation of *diversidad* as a queer resistance to a homonormative politics and its mobilizational capacity that will be further discussed.

Four

Queering Heteronormative Hegemony: Fostering Norms of Inclusivity

In my first week in Santiago, I met Eduardo, a 24 year old Law Student from Diego Portales University. Unlike most typical middle-class gay men, Eduardo was dressed in a plain shirt with his face completely bearded and his hair uncombed. His uninspired appearance was as much a reflection of his disillusionment with the state of Santiago's LGBT community. Pointing to the aggressiveness of MOVILH's politics, he complained about how the movement has been largely dominated by male voices at the expense of the lesbian and transgender community. He recollects:

> MOVILH is run by a permanent president who threatens everyone and treats lesbian and transgender people like shit. I used to run a website called 'Queer Collective' at my university. The website used to serve as a platform for LGBT students to discuss a range of topics from sexuality to queer theory. I was engaged by MOVILH through the university to run the website. As the university was private, it was not subjected to state regulations and funding, and as such, MOVILH had some degree of autonomy. Problems arose when some users wrote negative remarks about MOVILH's leadership. In response, MOVILH coerced me to reveal the IP addresses of everyone who posted

> negative comments. Eventually, I left and the domain wasn't renewed, so the website has been down since.[167]

Narratives of MOVILH's aggressive tactics is echoed by other LGBT activists and politicians. However, Eduardo's criticisms soon turned to other organizations:

> MUMS and Iguales are no different. MUMS is dominated by gay, male voices and Iguales is filled with rich, white men with ties to right-wing politicians.

In subsequent interviews and fieldwork with Iguales and MUMS, I discovered Eduardo's allegations to be unwarranted. Despite the fact that leaders from both organizations were mostly men, their strategies, policies, and members represented a diverse following. However, Eduardo's generalizations of politics within the movement are widely shared by a specific demographic of sexual minorities. These individuals are usually marginalized from commercial gay spaces and unaffiliated to any LGBT organizations. By examining internal organizational practices, this chapter seeks to address the disparity between the perception and reality of politics within the movement. Particularly, I will argue that although heteronormative hegemony has affected the movement in the past, avenues of queer resistance has emerged in recent years that has fostered norms of inclusivity. Focusing on the examples of Iguales and MUMS, I will demonstrate that the employment of intersectionality in the practices of these organizations have created inclusive norms benefitting marginalized sexual minorities.

[167] Eduardo, interview by Shyam Anand Singh, 11th June 2014, 2014.

This chapter will be divided into three parts. The first section explains the historical trajectory of the movement, beginning with the origins of MOVILH and the subsequent fracturing of the organization. In the second section, I will highlight some of the intersectional practices adopted by Iguales and MUMS. Lastly, I will elaborate on the framing strategies and alliances of Iguales and MUMS, and how these tactics attempt to alter pre-existing perceptions of the movement.

Integrationist to Queer Activism: Evolution of the Movement

Heteronormative hegemony, as a power system, extends beyond commercial gay spaces. In addition to exacerbating divisions amongst sexual minorities, it induces an integrationist strategy of gay activism that mainly serves to benefit the interests of middle-class gay men. The tactics of LGBT activists cannot be isolated from their inherent socialization. As heteronormativity culturally affirms institutions that privilege heterosexuality, such as marriage, it insidiously denigrates other forms of non-conforming identities. Thus, social upbringing in heteronormative settings typically lead many activists into a simplistic homonormative worldview.[168] LGBT movements typically encounter conflicts over assimilationist (or integrationist) and queer strategies. In general, assimilationists prefer to mimic heteronormativity believing that adopting dominant social norms (marriage or modelling relationships through butch/femme or *active*/*pasivo* gender dichotomies) would lead to better

[168] A homonormative worldview implies a monolithic comprehension of a wide array of non-heterosexual identities and issues.

credibility at the negotiating table. By demonstrating the ability to share the same values as heterosexuals, integrationists seek to be regarded as "normal". Queer activism, in contrast, seeks to subvert hegemonic worldviews. On a theoretical level, queer politics essentially refers to strategies empowering marginalized or subaltern voices. From a practical approach, it advocates employing intersectionality as a lived experience. In particular, not only does it raise awareness of the multiple social divisions amongst sexual minorities (class, gender, abilism), but it also seeks to move beyond identity politics by rejecting the essentialist frames conditioning our worldviews.[169] However, it would be erroneous to conceptualize assimilationist and queer approaches as dichotomous strategies. In reality, there is fluidity between the two and organizations typically employ a mixture of both.

The development of Chile's LGBT movement represents a shift from an assimilationist to a queer approach. Upon the return to democracy in 1990, homophobia was still rife in the country. This was reflected within the leadership of the *Agrupación de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos en Chile* (Collective of Relatives of Victims of "Disappearance" in Chile), an organization demanding for justice for the forced disappearances and executions of individuals (including gays, lesbians, and transsexuals) during Pinochet's regime. Sola Sierra, the group's founder, excluded sexual minorities from its human rights marches due to "her disgust with the gay movement".[170]

[169] Taylor, "Complexities and Complications: Intersections of Class and Sexuality," p.43.
[170] Nuñez Gonzalez, "Political Practices and Alliance Strategies of the Chilean Glbtt Movement," p.382.

In the wake of rampant discrimination compounded by the HIV epidemic inflicting the community, MOVILH was established in 1991.

From the outset, the movement had been divided over political strategies. In the first public conference organized by MOVILH in 1992, Carlos Sanchez an LGBT activist recalls, "some wanted nothing more than integration and a few wouldn't stand for anything less than radical liberation".[171] Yet, the movement was largely unified against the threat of HIV. This was necessitated by the fact that daily operations were heavily reliant on government subsidies for HIV prevention. Nonetheless, differences over strategic objectives emerged. Key leaders in MOVILH such as Rolando Jimenez, prioritized gay rights issues such as the decriminalization of sodomy laws over HIV prevention. This, as a consequence, led to an escalation of HIV infection rates. Alejandro Guajardo, who volunteered with MOVILH remarks:

> The two issues [HIV prevention and gay rights] should never have been separated. Had there been [unity] from the beginning, I think the homo-bisexual population would have lowered the HIV curve a lot more because the intervention strategies would have been more similar, rather than two different things.[172]

The HIV epidemic was particularly prevalent amongst gay men, which consequently worsened societal prejudice against sexual minorities. MOVILH's strategy, instead, centred on repealing Article 365 of the Constitution, which criminalized sexual relations between men. From the organization's perspective, the Article accorded moral legitimacy to the rampant discrimination and police violence against sexual minorities. For

[171] Lyons, "The Construction of Gay Identity in Chile," p.39.
[172] Frasca, "Chile: Seizing Empowerment," p.260.

instance, on 4 September 1993, a fire at a popular gay discotheque called *Divino* (Divine) in Valparaiso killed 16 people. Of the fifteen paramedics available at the scene, only one was willing to assist burned victims. Despite suspicions of arson, the police had been reluctant to lead investigations; the case has yet to be resolved.[173] However, the repeal of Article 365 in 1998 did little to mitigate homophobia and police violence against sexual minorities. In spite of the abrogation of Article 365, the Police Department employed Article 373 as a means of detaining gay men and the transgender. Article 373 refers to offenses to social morality (*ofensas a la moralidad social*) and was frequently used by the police to break up or dismiss gay parties or public gatherings. For example, on January 16 2000, eight gay men were arbitrarily stopped by a group of civilian men, who later revealed themselves as police. The eight were then brutally beaten and detained under Article 373. Even though they were released five days later, the accused police officers were neither charged nor sentenced.[174] Such incidences led some activists disillusioned with the strategies of MOVILH. Many lesbians and transgender individuals, moreover, felt marginalized by the movement and accused the leadership of gay chauvinism. Due to the fact that the anti-sodomy law was frequently used to persecute gay men for public gatherings and that many public events in the gay district were mostly congregated by men, many lesbians and gender minorities felt the main agenda of repealing Article 365 primarily served the interests of gay men.

Disillusioned by the dominance of cisgender gay interests, several leaders abandoned MOVILH to establish MUMS in 1998. The latter claimed to

[173] Lyons, "The Construction of Gay Identity in Chile," p.33.
[174] Ibid.

look beyond the parochial objectives of marriage equality. Specifically, it recognized the marginalization of subaltern lives within the LGBT community such as the poor, ethnic and gender minorities. More importantly, it underscored the need to work alongside different social movements. It seeks to highlight the struggles of LGBT workers adversely affected by capitalism. Victor Hugo Robles, one of the main founders of MUMS and nicknamed 'The Che of Gays'[175] explains:

> I'm more interested in subaltern life, characters that are outside of mainstream homosexuality. Gay [men] have bored me with this idea of marriage equality, to marry and have children… The Chilean homosexual movement lacks a proletarian working class identity. The current gay-rights organization serves the interest of the middle-class, forgetting that there is a great mass, a large group of poor homosexual people that do not have access to all the consumer goods they have. Our struggle, along with liberating sexuality, is to educate, feed, and provide mobility. I think, then, that it is important to make a link between the multiple struggles. [As such], campaigning for the rights of homosexual workers must also be championed in the wider interest of worker's rights and trade unionists.[176]

In this vein, MUMS embarked on a policy of coalition-building. It established several alliances with leftist parties and unions including the *Foro por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos* (Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights) and the *Foro de la Sociedad Civil* (Civil Society Forum), and the *Primer Sindicato de Trabajadoras y Trabajadores* LGBT (First Union of LGBT workers). For the transgender community, it assisted the creation of *Travestis y Transgénero de Chile*, or *Traves Chile* for short (Transvestites and

[175] The term 'Che' referring to the well-known revolutionary leader of the Cuban revolution, Che Guavara.
[176] Eduard Fernando Salazar, "Víctor Hugo Robles: Mi Sangre Es Roja," i.letrada: Revista de Capital Cultural, http://i.letrada.co/post/paraguero/73/victor-hugo-robles-mi-sangre-es-roja.

Transgenders of Chile), which later became autonomous.[177] The results of MUMS' initiatives were mixed. On one hand, it provided a political avenue for subaltern groups to assuage their grievances. On the other hand, as a small organization with limited resources, it faced considerable constraints on its capacity to represent all interests within the movement. Furthermore, given the dominance of Chile's two main party coalitions – the leftist *Concertación* and the right-wing *Alianza por Chile* – there have been occasions when transgender interests have been politicized by rightist parties. In early 2000s, for instance, transgender activists campaigned for the resolution of the mysterious murder of transsexual street workers. Their outcries, surprisingly, were answered by the former mayor of Santiago, Joaquín Lavín – the leader of the most conservative faction within the *Alianza* coalition. In an interview with the magazine *Revista de Critica Cultural*, transgender activist Silvia Parada describes the unlikely partnership:

> We have a very good relationship with Mayor Lavín. He is the only person, the only politician, despite his affiliation with *Opus Dei*, despite the fact that he is a conservative of the extreme right that has supported us. Not even President Lagos, a socialist, did the same.[178]

Despite MUMS' multi-vocal strategy, it lacked adequate resources and political clout to effectively represent transgender interests within the movement. Consequently, the Political Right's involvement with the transgender

[177] Nuñez Gonzalez, "Political Practices and Alliance Strategies of the Chilean Glbtt Movement," p.385.
[178] Sebastián Reyes, "Entrevista Con Silvia Parada," *Revista de Critica Cultural* November 2002.

community was heavily denounced by other gay rights organizations; furthering divisions within the movement.

Another limitation of MUMS' activism lies in its style of public engagement. As a representative of the 'homosexual left', it extensively employs theoretical knowledge of gender and sexuality as a basis of its strategy. Public education campaigns and protest marches are some examples of its tactics. However, they are effective insofar as participants possess the relevant political agency to resist heteronormative co-optation. As discussed in chapter three, neoliberalism by means of consumerism and the media, impedes the acquisition of political agency to critique the socialization of hierarchical logics within the LGBT community. Furthermore, MUMS' activism is mostly constrained to the socio-political sphere while largely neglecting commercial gay spaces. The organization's strategies are frequently characterized as 'high-level intellectualism' and 'politically radical' by many non-members – a testament to its inefficacy in engaging with the mainstream, middle-class sexual minority population.

The dynamics of the movement, however, was drastically altered upon the entrance of Fundación Iguales in 2011. Iguales was established after former President Sebastián Piñera, leader of the Conservative National Renewal (RN) Party, failed to endorse the Civil Union Agreement for same-sex couples. Luis Larrain, the organization's current president and one of its principal founders, also pointed to the excessively confrontational methods and 'ghetto

discourse'[179] of MOVILH's strategies that, at times, have hindered the movement's progress.[180] Contrary to MOVILH's method of harshly criticizing and suing right-wing politicians for hate-speech, Iguales attempts to engage moderate RN leaders in talks and informal exchanges. In terms of its public engagement, the organization claims to eschew from hostile politics and instead, utilizes 'creative and friendly' approaches of advancing its message. Due to its close alliance to MUMS, its organizational practices reflect a culture of inclusivity that is represented within its membership.

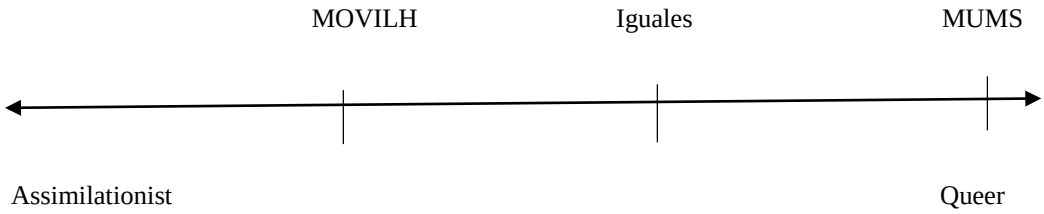

Figure 4.1 Diagram indicating degree of assimilationist/queer practice

The variation of assimilationist and queer approaches employed by each organization is comparatively illustrated in figure 4.1. MOVILH's emphasis on same-sex marriage, coupled with its organizational structure largely controlled by its long-serving President, Rolando Jimenez, implies an assimilationist approach as indicated by its position on the diagram above. By contrast, MUMS' intersectional and alliance building strategies represents a queer approach leads it to being on the right side of the assimilationist-queer spectrum.

[179] Larrain explains that MOVILH frequently accuses the more conservative politicians from the Independent Democratic Union (UDI) of classism. This has an effect of alienating right-wing politicians from the movement.
[180] Luis Larrain Stieb, interview by Shyam Anand Singh, 25th June 2014, 2014.

Iguales, however, is revealed to be at the mid-point of the spectrum. This is because integrationist and queer strategies are not mutually exclusive. Although Iguales employs intersectionality and occasionally advocates for transgender issues, its main campaigns centre on the AUC and same-sex marriage.

Intersectionality in Queer Spaces

Intersectionality can be a tricky practice. It involves a delicate balance of obscuring identities while concurrently preserving the memories and experiences of those identities. Hence, how can queer activists advocate to simultaneously abolish sexual, gender, racial, and class differentiation while valorising the specificity of structural privilege? In this section, we will discuss three main methods used by organizations to subvert the legibility of identities which thereby espouse a culture of anti-essentialism. This is not to say that anti-essentialism necessarily fosters a climate of ignorance toward the multiple persecutions and oppressions of marginalized groups. Rather, anti-essentialism espouses an environment where profiling based on ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and ableism is mitigated.

Public Education Campaigns

Since its inception in 1998, MUMS has been at the forefront of queer activism. In the past, it has campaigned alongside various causes including abortion rights, labour unions, HIV prevention, and gender identity bills. At the same time, it also works to alter societal norms by educating the public through workshops and forums. Gloria, a volunteer psychologist at MUMS, argues that political and legal change is insufficient to bring about respect and acceptance

of diversity. More importantly, she highlights the need to engage norms and values that condition the way people perceive identities.[181]

Given Chile's patriarchal history, one particular challenge encountered by the organization is subverting society's rigid gender binaries. As misogyny and discrimination against lesbians, transgenders, and cisgender femme males within the LGBT community is emblematic of wider societal prejudice against femininity, the organization often conducts workshops that explain the social construction of gender. The following dialogue during my interview with Gloria sums up the crux of the organization's gender and sexuality workshops:

Gloria : Gender is inherently distinct from sex. Sex is what's between your legs, gender is what's between your head. In reality, we all have both genders inside of us. In order for one to identify as a man, we are, by default, defining what a woman is.

Me : Okay, so how does this play out in Chile?

Gloria : It's a combination of patriarchy and capitalism that depreciates the value of a woman. Capitalism has created this fairy-tale that in order for a woman to be loved by a man, she has to beautify herself, otherwise love doesn't exist. In the process, the woman becomes commoditized as a sexual object.

Me : Interesting… So how does MUMS deal with this?

Gloria : We must allow for society to look at women as *subjects* and not objects. In a sense, we need to change the way society conditions men to view women. We are taught that sexual desire manifests in the form of physical intercourse, but in reality, the possibility within the sexual dimension is infinite. Look at the BDSM community, a lot of personal experiences with orgasms are triggered without intercourse. So… this means that emotions and psychology also play a part in our sexual experiences. As a *machista* society, we teach our boys not to cry, and this results in a culture of objectification. Essentially, we need to focus on these small microaggressions – WE NEED TO LET BOYS CRY! We need to empower men to express an emotion. It is a gradual way for men to lose power and to eventually destroy the gender binary.

[181] Gloria, interview by Shyam Anand Singh, 5th August 2014, 2014.

Gloria's explication demonstrates the forms of counter-knowledge necessary to queering heteronormative worldviews. Within the organization, however, two main issues impede the acceptance of such knowledge. The first challenge involves the decentralized decision-making structure of MUMS. This implies that the six teams working on specialized issues – namely the psychological, political, human rights, territorial, communications, and women's team – often possess distinct strategies. Gloria claims that the difficulty lies in synchronizing these disparate visions and approaches at the organizational level. This task is especially crucial during public events like protest marches and conferences amidst the possibility of being interviewed by journalists. A second issue concerns identity politics within the organization. One such instance is the women's team, which was created as a strategy to incorporate feminism into the queer movement. But with an all-female presence, the team encounters periodic tensions with an all-male leadership within MUMS. Due to the prevalence of *Machismo*, the collective experience of female subjugation often translates to a lack of trust between the women's team and the organization's leadership; especially when women's interests are relegated in favour of other issues. These tensions underscores an important lesson on the challenges of intersectionality – at times, redressing perceptions of inequality through adequate representation is integral to fostering norms of trust.

Inclusion of Heterosexual Allies

Cultivating perceptions of equality, at times, involves recruiting allies into the rank and file of the movement. Gloria, for instance, is a straight-ally and a Venezuelan national who was recently promoted to the head of the political

team. Assimilating heterosexual allies is a critical validation of the movement's claim to upholding sexual diversity.[182] But apart from its symbolic importance, heterosexual incorporation substantively benefits the norms and collective identity within the organization. This was evidenced from my fieldwork in Iguales. In my first day, I met Carlos, a 35-year-old campaign manager. We were discussing his work until I asked: "So at which age did you come out?" His tone changed and he awkwardly replied: "Well… I'm straight". Embarrassed by my mistake, I immediately apologised for my assumption.[183] Deriding it as an anomaly, I did not think of it further.

It was eleven o' clock at night and we gathered at the headquarters of Iguales for a pre-party. Iguales is divided into eleven commissions and during my stint, I was attached to the intervention commission.[184] Despite the differences, there is a lot of camaraderie and interaction across groups. For the fifteen of us that were there, we decided to start the night with a drinking game entitled 'Never have I ever'. I settled next to Francisca, a 28 year old volunteer who was head of the Regional Commission. As the game progressed, we started talking and I carelessly asked, "So do you have a girlfriend?" She chuckled and responded, "No, but that's because I'm straight. In fact, there are a number of us in Iguales that are straight-allies." She indicated to two other individuals sitting across the table. I then realised the falsity of my presumptions. Unlike

[182] Framing the movement in terms of 'sexual diversity' is perceived as more inclusive than employing traditional frames of 'gay rights' or 'marriage equality'.

[183] This assumption derived from my volunteering experience with the LGBT movement in Singapore. For the few straight-allies that are involved in events, it a norm to clarify their sexual identity without being questioned. For instance, many straight-allies would introduce themselves as, "Hi, I'm Jonathan, this is my first time volunteering with [name of organization] and I'm straight". This is mainly due to the prevalence of homophobia in society. As a consequence, a huge social divide persists between straight-allies and sexual minorities in these organizations.

[184] The Intervention commission is in charge of conducting public campaigns and outreach.

LGBT organizations in Singapore, Iguales and MUMS comprise an eclectic mix of individuals from distinct socio-economic, political, gender, and sexual backgrounds. But in contrast to MUMS, organizational pride and identity was stronger in Iguales. In fact, volunteers there possessed stronger bonds regardless of sexual and gender orientation.

Apprehending the reasons for this feelings of attachment entails harking back to the underlying rationale for the formation of gay enclaves. Desiring a safe space for non-heteronormative sexual expression and the freedom to briefly 'step out of the closet' are some explanations for the creation of commercial gay spaces. This is consistent with Berlant's articulation of an 'intimate public'. Referring to the example of women's culture in the US, Berlant points out that women's sense of community is a product of an 'intimate public'; wherein a strong sense of belonging is cultivated through a commodity culture that markets the multitude experiences of women, borne out of patriarchy.[185] However, this capitalist enterprise has been criticized for over-representing a white, middle-class demographic. In addition to neglecting the interests of subaltern communities, this 'intimate public' rarely threatens the patriarchal institutions that accredits its formation. Instead, rather than interrogating these hegemonic structures, the 'intimate public' functions as a form of consensus to these patriarchal institutions through its perfunctory, commercialized allusions. In the case of sexual minorities, the experience of living life in the closet operates a form of an 'intimate public'. Moreover, although commercialized gay spaces provide temporary reprieve from heteronormative persecution, these

[185] Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture*, pp. 5-7.

avenues privilege the bodies and desires of middle-class gay men. LGBT organizations, by contrast, allow a space for the discussion and sharing of homophobic repression, regardless of gender, class, and political background. In doing so, volunteers forge an emotional and social connection with each other. Furthermore, unlike the superficiality of commercialized gay spaces, LGBT organizations works as an agent to challenge heteronormative institutions. In other words, rather than according a temporary reprieve from the closet, queer organizations seek to abolish it.

But how does the closet influence the social attachment of heterosexual volunteers to Iguales? Most of the straight individuals I interviewed joined Iguales because of a family member or close friend that was disowned due to their sexual orientation. The resulting trauma and struggles compelled them to join as a means of circumventing homophobia. Others did so initially out of curiosity and eventually stayed due to the strong culture of inclusivity. Francisca, for instance, divulges:

> I don't have any close family or friends that are gay. I joined Iguales because it was different from other organizations. It's one of the few organizations that gets in touch with people on the ground. For instance, they [Iguales volunteers] would hold really funny placards on the streets and ask the public to take photos with them. When I joined in 2011, everyone was so welcoming even though I was straight. We talk to each other regardless of our [sexual] orientation. We don't go by labels. In fact, we would talk, text, and support each other even outside meetings. I mean, I don't wanna sound corny or anything… but it feels like a family.[186]

Heterosexual presence, furthermore, accords ambiguity within the organization. This blurring, in fact, operates in two directions. Ayres and Brown assert that

[186] Francisca, interview by Shyam Anand Singh, 21st July 2014, 2014.

"by permitting gay, lesbian, and bisexual people to pass as heterosexual, the closet also 'ambiguates' what it means to be heterosexual".[187] Indeed, this often involves straight allies renouncing their heterosexual privilege and being confronted by heteronormative persecution. Hence, because sexuality is not an embodied attribute, straight allies also encounter discrimination. Francisca, for instance, frequently receives confusing queries from outsiders on her affiliation to Iguales. In fact, she has lost several close friends since joining the organization. Many straight allies, furthermore, are also unfazed when mistaken for being gay during protest marches. Francisca shares her experience of leading the stage during pride marches:

> I don't care about being mistaken as lesbian or transgender. Some people may feel shy about it but I'm fine with it. I'm proud of myself as a woman. I do it because I want to increase female visibility. I want to give others hope that there is a woman out there who is fighting for this cause.[188]

Thus, as heterosexuals join LGBT organizations, there is an implicit act of stepping into the closet. In doing so, it blurs the definitions of gay identity and fosters a climate of inclusivity.

Gender-neutral Language

Heteronormativity is deeply embedded in our daily lives, most notably in the language we use. In Spanish-speaking societies, language is a predominant medium enforcing the gender binary. For the most part, the Spanish language privileges the male figure. Within a group, for instance, the male pronoun is typically employed to refer to everyone, regardless of one's gender identity. For example, when greeting a group of people, one might say:

[187] Brown, *Straightforward: How to Mobilize Heterosexual Support for Gay Rights*, p.98.
[188] Francisca, "Interview with Francisca, Head of the Regional Commission, Iguales."

"*Hola a todos!*" (Hello to everybody!)

If the group is comprised of all women, the word *todos*, which refers to everybody in masculine, would be replaced with *todas*, the same word in feminine. However, as long as one man is present, the word *todos* is employed regardless of the presence of females or the gender identity of the male subject. The gender binary, furthermore, is extensively inherent in Spanish. Most adjectives, for instance, change form depending on the gender of the pronoun. Consider the following distinction:

"*El chico alto*" (The tall boy)

"*La chica alta*" (The tall girl)

In this case, the adjective *alto* (tall - masculine) switches to *alta* (tall – feminine) when the subject changes from *el chico* (the boy) to *la chica* (the girl). For many cisgender people, the pervasiveness of the gender binary does not affect them. However, to most transgender and gender queer individuals, this could result in situations of gender misrecognition, wherein gender pronouns and adjectives may be incorrectly applied to them. Such instances of mislabelling may serve to further marginalize transgender and gender non-binary individuals that encounter existing forms of stigma.

Accordingly, organizations like Iguales and MUMS has adopted the use of gender-neutral language within their spaces in efforts to promote better inclusion. This practice concerns nullifying the gender suffixes 'a' and 'o' in speech and writing, and substituting it with 'x'. Hence, a gender-neutral way of greeting a mixed-gender group would be, "*Hola a todxs*!"[189] In this case, neither

[189] *Todxs* is pronounced toh-deys.

does the salutation privilege any specific gender identity nor does it have the potential to mischaracterize an individual's gender. Many activists and volunteers I spoke to at Iguales mentioned the role of adopting gender-neutrality in speech and writing in cultivating an anti-essentialist mindset. From my observations, I noticed that this practice inculcated a culture of interaction that mitigated ethnic, class, gender, and sexual profiling. In doing so, it created an unassuming and amicable environment that provided a space for the inclusion of subaltern voices within the movement.

Framing Intersectionality: *Diversidad*

Despite the diversity within the movement, Iguales and MUMS have been characterized as serving the interests of middle-class gay men. As previously discussed, this perception sharply contrasts from first-hand accounts in these organizations. Understanding the divergence between perception and reality holds critical implications for the mobilizational capacity for LGBT activism in Chile. Thus, how did this perception arise and what counter-measures are being advanced to reverse this trend?

In the previous chapter, I elucidated on neoliberalism's role in the propagation of discriminatory discourses within the lesbian and gay sub-cultures. The internalization of societal cleavages within heterosexist society leads to an extension of these divisions amongst sexual minorities. In the Chilean LGBT context, therefore, systemic discrimination surrounding class and gender results in a pattern of distrust toward organizations led by individuals with an upper-class background. Luis Larrain, president of Iguales,

claims that one of the reasons for his organization's mischaracterization lies with Chile's historical experience with class divisions and his family background. He explains:

> One of the reasons is because of my *apellido* (last name). In Chile, a person's apellido is very important because it indicates your status and wealth. My apellido 'Larrain' is well-reputed for being associated with the aristocracy. My father was actually a very famous economist for Chile's neoliberal reforms during the military regime. I do not fully agree with what he has championed… I am a different person from my father.[190]

It appears that misperceptions within the LGBT community is largely a result of information asymmetry. To resolve this, Iguales and MUMS primarily employs two main framing strategies concerning *diversidad* (diversity): alliance building and creative public engagement.

Alliance Building

The framing of *diversidad* is a recent phenomenon. Since the 1990s, sexual rights marches have assumed several names: 'Gay Parade', 'Gay Pride', and 'March for Sexual Diversity'. In 2011, the organizations dropped the word 'sexual' henceforth referring to their marches as 'March for Diversity'. According to Kena Lorenzini, the rationale for the name change was to attract more people across ideological sectors and political parties.[191] However, the change was not purely coincidental.

In actuality, the *diversidad* frame corresponds to the rise of Iguales and reflects a shift in movement politics. Prior to 2011, the primacy of the movement

[190] Larrain Stieb, "Interview with Luis Larrain Stieb, President of Fundación Iguales."
[191] Kena Lorenzini, *Diversidad Sexual: 10 Años De Marchas En Chile* (Santiago de Chile: Ocho Libros, 2011).

centred on the legal recognition of same-sex partnerships. As such, transgender issues were typically sidelined. During this period, the movement was largely dominated by MOVILH's president, Rolando Jimenez, who possessed transphobic views. Juan Rios, a former MOVILH activist, claims:

> [Rolando Jimenez] thought you couldn't very well send a transvestite, or a very effeminate gay man, to speak with politicians. He thought we should present the image of a [male] homosexual who was masculine, serious, rational, and political. And [according to him] all those qualities are masculine qualities, so all the homosexuals that were a little effeminate were sent back to the closet. From that point on, the movement has never had a leader who is an effeminate man.[192]

A greater interest in transgender issues came about when Iguales joined the movement. The emergence of a new organization that embraced the *diversidad* frame not only undermined MOVILH's mobilizing potential, but was seen as a contender for funds. To avoid alienating political and financial support, MOVILH was compelled to increase its activism for transgender causes. This, however, was not without controversy. In 2012, after four years of collaborating with the Ministry of Health, MOVILH celebrated when sex reassignment surgeries were included under the country's national health plan, *Fonasa* (National Health Fund). This meant that the cost of the operations would be funded by the state. Depending on a patient's income bracket, the poorest citizens would be able to get sex reassignment surgeries for free.[193] However, the legislation was followed with a caveat; patients had to undergo psychiatric therapy. Members of the trans organization, *Organizando Trans Diversidades*

[192] Campbell, "*Movilh*-Ization: Hegemonic Masculinity in the Queer Social Movement Industry in Santiago De Chile," p.102.
[193] Pedro Garcia and Paula Ettlelbrick Fellow, "Chilean Paradoxes: Lgbt Rights in Latin America," International Gay and Human Rights Commission, https://iglhrc.wordpress.com/2012/08/13/chilean-paradoxes-lgbt-rights-in-latin-america/.

(OTD), had mixed sentiments. Although the ruling was celebrated, members criticized the inclusion of a psychiatrist in the procedure arguing that it perpetuated the stigma of transgenderism as a mental condition.[194] MOVILH's disregard for minority perspectives is emblematic of a wider trend of hegemonic masculinity within Chilean politics. This refers to the notion that in order to acquire the political capital necessary to access the state, gay men would have to accentuate their masculinity in order to compensate for a lack of heterosexual capital.[195]

In response to the belligerent and domineering tactics of MOVILH, eight LGBT organizations representing gays, lesbians, and transgenders banded together to espouse a more collaborative strategy in tackling the various issues confronting the community.[196] Called *Frente de la Diversidad Sexual* (Sexual Diversity Front or FDS), the alliance was conceived in 2013 as a break from the community's fractious past. Magdalena Martin, coordinator of the FDS explains:

> In recent years, there has been a proliferation of NGOs in Chile focusing on the demands and defence of LGBTI rights. However, not all are visible to the public or know each other, especially those found in Santiago and other regions. This has heightened the image of disintegration and disruption that has characterized the movement for over twenty years and it is something that we seek to break with this campaign.[197]

[194] Ibid.
[195] R.W. Connell, "A Very Straight Gay - Masculinity, Homosexual Experience, and the Dynamics of Gender," *American Sociological Review* 57, no. 6 (1992).
[196] The eight organizations are ACCIONGAY, Iguales, MUMS, OTD, *Fundación Todo Mejora, Valdiversa*, *Agrupación Lésbica Rompiendo el Silencio*, and *Fundación Zamudio.*
[197] Instituto Nacional de Derechos Humanos, "*Frente De La Diversidad Sexual Lanzó Campaña Dirigida a Las Organizaciones Lgbti*," (2015).

The FDS, furthermore, grants member organizations the platform to better coordinate resources and strategies. Through lectures, seminars, campaigns, social networks, and public demonstrations, the partnership seeks to sensitize Chilean society to addressing human rights violations. Thus far, it seems to suggest that the alliance provides increased representation to lesbians and transgender, who have been previously marginalized in MOVILH. For instance, the FDS was the first non-transgender organization to organize a public march for a gender identity bill in June 2015.[198] Despite its recent establishment, several lesbians and transsexuals I spoke to had a positive impression of the alliance's capability in according adequate representation to their grievances.

Creative Public Engagement

Reforming the fragmented image of a movement entails not just the articulation of concrete strategies, but also effectively communicating these changes to members of the public. Thus, framing strategies play a critical role in altering perceptions within the LGBT community. Upon the adoption of *diversidad*, MOVILH organized several public campaigns to revive its image. One recent example is its *diversidad* campaign in metro stations across Santiago. In

[198]A gender identity law would permit transgender individuals to change their gender identity without the need to modify their names or bodies. See Clemence Rerolle, "Why Chileans Will Be Marching for the Rights of Transgender Community on Saturday," *I Love Chile News* (2015), http://www.ilovechile.cl/chileans-will-marching-rights-transgender-community-saturday/.

Figure 4.2 A poster of MOVILH's *diversidad* campaign. The slogan at the top states, "With respect, discrimination will be left behind."[199]

collaboration with the European Union and the Social Development Ministry, the campaign consists of putting up posters throughout all of the 108 city's metro stations. The poster, as seen in figure 4.2, features homosexual couples, a boy with down syndrome, an elderly woman, and a pregnant woman. Its intention was to spark conversation and awareness on what being a minority meant.[200] However, public reaction has been muted. Several heterosexual and LGBTQ people I spoke to praised the campaign's intentions but were critical of its effectiveness. Most alluded to the posters vague and simplistic portrayal of minority identities while some queer activists criticized the heteronormative framing of gays and lesbians as an effort to conform to the standards of heteronormative society.

Between MOVILH, Iguales, and MUMS, public seminars, workshops, and protest marches forms the backbone of its activism. However, these

[199] Flickr-MOVILH Chile, "Metro De Santiago Y Movilh Lanzan Inédita Campaña Por El Respeto Y La Diversidad / @Movilh 2014," (2014).
[200] Ivan Vargas, "Santiago Metro Teams up with Lgbtq Activists to Fight Discrimination," *The Santiago Times*, 29th April 2014 2014.

approaches have been limited in its effectiveness due to the 'serious' tone of its events. Thus, since its establishment, Iguales has also employed creative strategies that seeks to communicate its message of *diversidad* to the public. The bulk of these strategies are conceived by the Intervention Commission which organizes events and public campaigns. Unlike MOVILH and MUMS, Iguales is more active in its grassroots engagement and frames itself as a 'fun' and 'youthful' organization. For instance, to raise awareness of its march in September 2014, members of the Intervention Commission dressed up in Superman costumes and attached the Iguales flag as capes while walking around the city. The strategy managed to generate an increased level of interest and excitement amongst the public. Another example of its creative outreach includes the annual '*Salir del closet*' (Coming out of the closet) campaign. The campaign provides a first-hand experience of how being a victim of homophobia feels like. It involves positioning a closet in a public space and inviting people to step inside. As the doors are closed, volunteers surround the closet and shout a variety of homophobic, racial, and misogynistic slurs. At the end of the experience, participants are invited to step outside the closet and pose with a sign expressing, "*Yo salí del closet*" (I have come out of the closet – as seen in figure 4.3). Although tackling homophobia is the main goal of this campaign, racial and misogynistic slurs are deliberately added to highlight the multiple intersectionalities of discrimination within the LGBT community.

Figure 4.3 Participant in the 'Salir del Closet' Campaign[201]

Iguales' approach presents further possibilities for outreach into the LGBT community. A key takeaway of intersectionality as practiced within Iguales and MUMS relays the importance of confronting quotidian microaggressions as a means of circumventing heteronormative hegemony. As every socially embedded assumption on sexuality, gender, class, and ethnicity is gradually undermined, interaction becomes less regulated by essentialist tropes. In so doing, a more unassuming and inclusive culture is fostered.

[201] The Clinic Online, "*Parlamentarios Y Líderes Políticos "Salieron Del Clóset" Con Fundación Iguales*," (2014).

Five

Conclusion

All things considered, commercialized gay spaces are not representative of the entire demographic of sexual and gender non-conforming minorities. It is important to appreciate that although capitalism has increased the visibility of sexual minorities, it has largely benefitted middle-class, cisgender, gay men. Lower-income, indigenous, and poor sexual minorities have been marginalized and rendered invisible in Santiago. Moreover, capitalism's incursion into gay spaces has propagated a culture of discriminatory discourses. Yet, in spite of this, several LGBT organizations have managed to manufacture a sense of community through their mobilizational efforts. Hence, this study has sought to address two main questions concerning the politics of collective action: first, what are the origins of these discriminatory discourses and what are its implications on gay culture? Second, what strategies do organizations employ to overcome this collective action problem?

Applying Ludwig's theory of heteronormative hegemony, I have argued that the adoption of neoliberal policies in Chile has resulted in an increased commercialization of gay spaces, inadvertently engendering a proliferation of discriminatory discourses. Capitalist expansion into gay enclaves like Bombero

Núñez has given rise to a 'pleasure economy'. With the establishment of bars, clubs, and saunas, the pleasure economy regulates the legibility of sexual and gender identities. However, not all identities have been equally embraced. These spaces privilege masculine, cisgender, upper-class gay men, which correspondingly, mirrors the social hierarchy of Chilean society. Although class and gender divisions have been present since colonial rule, neoliberalism has exacerbated these inequalities within the gay community. These neoliberal institutions possess a heteronormative logic that is largely an extension of colonialist worldviews. Through systems of representation and iteration, sexual minorities internalize these power structures and reproduce them within their own spaces. Representative systems concern the institutions that penetrate into the daily lives of individuals, directly or indirectly, projecting normative worldviews such as masculine supremacy. In the case of Chile, the conservative media and the emergence of a 'gay lifestyle' has reinforced popular tropes associated with 'being gay'. The gradual internalization of these tropes leads to iterative practices within gay spaces. Within gay enclaves, therefore, gay men tend to perform these heteronormative identities. As such, this leads to a culture glorifying masculinity. Effeminate men are marginalized while the sexual role of *pasivo* (penetrated) is stigmatized. Accessing the social spaces in these bars, clubs, and saunas therefore requires some forms of economic and masculine capital that are unattainable to lower-class, poor, and effeminate gay men. Furthermore, a discourse of body labels further fosters a culture of exclusivity and discrimination.

Yet, despite these divisive forces, LGBT organizations like Iguales and MUMS have managed to attract a diverse following. How have these

organizations managed to overcome this culture of heteronormative hegemony? In large part, these organizations have employed variants of queer activism that incorporates intersectionality. This implies that unlike the previous emphasis on marriage equality, these organizations have broadened their focus to include other issues such as gender identity laws, workers' rights, and student movements. Essentially, the queer strategies of Iguales and MUMS relies on two key aspects: internal organizational practices and external framing. In terms of organizational practices, both groups employ gender-neutral language both formally and informally in their daily speech and writing. Additionally, heterosexual allies can be found in the rank and file of both organizations. In tandem, the incorporation of both approaches has inculcated a culture of inclusivity and acceptance. To ensure that these principles are effectively communicated to the public, LGBT organizations have also adopted creative strategies to promote its rhetoric of *diversidad*. Iguales, for instance, have attempted to engage both marginalized sexual minorities and the mainstream public through its '*salir del closet*' campaign. In addition, MUMS also advocates for other issues including redressing gender violence, upholding workers' rights, and enforcing gender equality through public education campaigns. Compared to MOVILH, MUMS and Iguales are relatively younger and less financially endowed organizations. However, forming an alliance through the FDS has enabled both groups to share resources, expertise, and networks.

Moving forward, as Chile inches towards marriage equality, the rights of sexual minorities in the outer provinces and peripheries have been left unacknowledged. Due to the constraints of this study, a large part of this

investigation has focused in the urban confines of Santiago. Future research, perhaps, could be conducted in the outer provinces to uncover the struggles of sexual minorities in indigenous communities.

In sum, three key points pertaining to sexual rights and gay culture are worth mentioning. For starters, the concept of 'free will', as it exists in neoliberal economies, is illusory. A fundamental tenet of neoliberalism, as described by Hennessy, lies with "the advocacy of entrepreneurial initiative and individualism – in the form of self-help, volunteerism, or morality rooted in free will and personal responsibility".[202] But as neoliberalism encroaches on to gay enclaves, a paradox arises. On one hand, the emergence of the pleasure economy provides the freedom for sexual minorities to freely congregate and express themselves without fear of state persecution. However, acceptance in these sites are contingent upon the ability to conform to societal standards of beauty and masculinity that may only be accessed with a certain level of masculine and financial capital. Individuals who do not comply with these standards are marginalized; their exclusion justified as an act of 'free will' by the in-group. Thus, heteronormative hegemony gains its power from the fear of social exclusion. In other words, the participation of sexual minorities in the 'gay lifestyle' is hardly a product of free will, but largely a result of structural forces inherent in one's social conditioning.

Second, with regards to collective mobilization, LGBT organizations promoting *diversidad* should ensure that their rhetoric is consistent with their practice. As evidenced in chapter four, MOVILH's *diversidad* campaign in

[202] Hennessy, *Profit and Pleasure: Sexual Identities in Late Capitalism*, p.78.

public metro stations contradicts the androcentrism and misogyny within its leadership. Many members of Iguales indicated that its internal practices of equality and acceptance was the main reason for joining the field of activism. If not for Iguales and MUMS, in fact, many peripheral identities within the LGBT community would have remained marginalized.

The last key point deals with the issue of privilege. Although structural privilege plays a role in sustaining heteronormative hegemony within gay culture, it can also be a vital instrument for evoking empathy. On one hand, privileged members within the LGBT community typically dismiss the existence of class and gender inequalities within their spaces. Often types, class and gender-based discrimination goes unnoticed as an exercise of 'free will'. But on the other hand, as Iguales and MUMS has shown, privilege can also be exploited to highlight these same issues. For instance, despite being largely controlled by cisgender gay men, Iguales advocates for a range of issues beyond marriage equality such as gender identity bills and anti-discrimination laws. In fact, its president Luis Larrain, the son of a wealthy economist, often capitalizes on his popularity and fame as a former model to champion for transgender interests. Therefore, privilege, by itself, is not a pernicious commodity; rather, it is the awareness and use of one's privilege that matters.

In a sense, LGBT advocacy in neoliberal settings can be a messy state of affairs. This is especially so when it comes to interest articulation and agenda setting. While queer activists continue to challenge heteronormative institutions, it is vital to apprehend that most of the minds behind those strategies have been socialized by the very same institutions. Overcoming heteronormative hegemony, therefore, entails recognizing this broader power

structure. As more organizations embrace intersectionality, it is hoped that the process of fighting for equality will be made more equal.

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